



ROK GAME FANTASY STORY
유성 게임 판타지 장편 소설

아크
더
레전드
ARK THE LEGEND

ARK
THE LEGEND

BOOK 08

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Ark the Legend

(아크 더 레전드)

by
Yoo Seong

Synopsis

A new game which the nation has dived into.

From the bloody battlefields to the pyramids of ancient times, head into the colourful world of Galaxian.

The glorious days of the legendary gamer Ark is over.

From finding a job to saving the party from a humiliating death, nothing is easily solved.....

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Space 1: Escape

SPACE 1: Escape

Ku ku ku ku! Ku ku ku ku!

Flames rose out of the darkness in the centre of the Harmadon constellation!
In the midst of those flames was a black entity.

- I’m back!*
- The resentment that was never erased!*
- I will bring an end to all living beings in this star system!*
- There will be a flurry of despair!*
- Endless darkness!*

Sound poured out from it. It wasn’t a language. It could only be called a sound. Will! It was the intense will emitted by a higher dimensional being. Any debris in the vast space of the Harmadon constellation was eaten by the darkness.....

– [Episode II: Dark Omen] has begun.

The new century had started.

‘What, what the?’

Ark was confused. He couldn’t understand what was happening. A red flash shot out from the antenna and it became dark at the same time. Even with

Ark's Clairvoyance ability, he could only see many silhouettes in the darkness. It was impossible to see what was going on in space. No, he wasn't even interested in what was happening in space.

'.....Dammit!'

It was so dark that it was difficult to discern the area in front of him. It wasn't a good situation for Ark.

"Irina-nim, hurry!"

"B-but I can't see anything....."

Kakak! Ka ka ka ka!

The sharp sound of iron interrupted her words. Voices with the distinctive accent of the Katz could be heard.

"Kikit! You cheeky humans! Where are you looking?"

This was the reason Ark was in a rush. The Katz had the characteristics of its species and specialized in catching its prey in the darkness. The Katz used the darkness to attack Irina's group without mercy. The Katz and Irina's group were only a few metres away from him but he couldn't distinguish between friend and foe. Ark hurriedly shouted in a menacing voice.

"Stop it! If you don't stop immediately....."

"What will you do?"

The answer came from behind him. Ark jumped as he met a golden-eyed gaze. The Katz hadn't just approached Irina's group under the cover of darkness. Ark stepped back but the sharp claws had already scratched his wrist. He lost strength in his hand and dropped the grenade.

"Kekeke! That's it! Now!"

“Kyaak! Shall we start earnestly attacking? I’ll tear you apart!”

A Katz who had been waiting on the side jumped towards him. The Katz’ claws were sharp enough to tear less quality armour! Ark rolled along the ground and stretched his arms towards the grenade.

“Psychokinesis!”

It was the power to move an object with his mind! The grenade was caught with his telekinesis power and flew towards him. However the sharp claws hit Ark’s hand just before he could grab the grenade.

“We’ve seen your strange power already.”

The Katz watching him with an elated expression was the one who first attacked him. He picked up the grenade that rolled to his feet and muttered.

“It’s up to here. Now you will die.”

The 2 Katz started earnestly attacking him. The attacks battered him from both sides and didn’t give him any room to breathe! It became many times more difficult because the opponents were just silhouettes. However this wasn’t the first time Ark experienced it in a battle.

‘The training centre in the sanctuary!’

He fought warriors armed with a sword and gun. Vision wasn’t a great help in a battle like that. If he thought about a move then it would be too late. Move before seeing. Move before thinking. That was the reason why martial arts training repeated the same movement thousands of times. It was to engrave the movement into every part of their body! He also needed to figure out the enemy’s movement. A situation like this made Ark’s senses extremely keen.

‘I can sense their movement!’

Wiing! Wiing! Wiing!

The blue ray danced in the darkness. The blade created with electromagnetism cut through flesh. The Katz retreated with confusion.

“Kyik! This bastard, he is strong!”

“How is a human making these movements?”

The Katz weren't a match for Ark even when his vision was restricted. But Ark's opponent wasn't only the Katz. There was the robed man called Marshal who was a powerful Esper and 200 Kero clan. Ark wouldn't be able to deal with all of them even if he was level 100. That's why he originally tried to take the antenna hostage to let Irina's group escape first. However he had lost the grenade. And Irina was stuck in front of him fighting the Katz. It was the worst situation due to the sudden darkness but.....

‘It is still too early to give up!’

The Kero wasn't attacking at the moment. That was obvious by the fact that he was still alive. Ark and the Katz were fighting next to the antenna spouting the red light. That's probably why the Marshal and Kero were staying out of it. Unlike the Katz' attacks, the lightning or bullets would likely damage the antenna. This meant he could still use the antenna against them.

‘As expected, the disk is the only way out!’

But the grenade had already fallen into the hands of the Katz. There was only one way remaining!

‘Sink or swim!’

“Psychokinesis! Psychokinesis!”

Ark stretched his arms towards the Katz holding the grenade. However Ark's skill was only at the beginner level. If he concentrated carefully then he could only move a small object. It was impossible to take away the grenade that the

Katz were holding tightly!

Kakakakak!

He actually received a stitch in the side from firing Psychokinesis in rapid succession. The Katz held onto the grenade and said in a derisive voice.

“Kikiki, how ridiculous. Your supernatural abilities are useless if I’m holding the item.”

“Yes.....hold on tightly.”

Ark lifted his head. And a small piece of metal fell into his hand.

“That will send you to hell.”

“What?”

The Katz frowned.

Then he saw the metal piece in Ark’s hand and seemed to realize something. He looked at the grenade in his hand and his face darkened.

“O-oh my god! The safety pin.....!”

The grenade was missing its safety pin. While the Katz was holding tightly to the grenade, Ark had targeted Psychokinesis at the safety pin!

“Irina-nim, get down!”

Kwa kwa kwa kwa! Kwa kwa kwa kwa! Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

Ark threw his body back as there was an explosion. The Katz shattered and flew away as the grenade exploded. One side of the disk was also damaged.

Kukukuku! Kwajijiji! Kwajijiji!

The light gushing from the dish started shaking violently. The light that had been concentrated on one point scattered into hundreds of different stems.

Then there was a large roaring sound that shook the eardrums. Cracks spread on the walls of the mine and rocks started falling. The Kero ran around in confusion as the light scattered all over the place from the broken disk. Ark jumped up and scanned the surroundings.

“Irina-nim!”

“Kuak! T-this bastard!”

“Get lost!”

Wiing! Wiing! Wiing!

Ark swung his sword at the Katz and went towards Irina.

“Ark-nim, what is going on....?”

“We’ll talk about it later. Let’s hurry. There is no more time to delay!”

“I understand. Camel!”

“Yes, Ensign-nim. Tin, go to the cockpit first!”

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu!

Camel fired his bullets with the rest of the crew as he shouted. And the Kero started to fire back. Ark stood in front of Irina’s group and used Sword Defense to block the hundreds of bullets. He stopped bullets to vital spots like his head, neck or heart but the other parts of his body was inevitable.

-You have lost 35 health!

-You have lost 23 health!

-You have lost 42 health.....

Blood went everywhere as his health gradually decreased.

“Recovery Ampoule!”

-You have used the recovery ampoule loaded on the Nymph.

<Your health has been restored by 500>

His health recovered briefly thanks to the recovery ampoule but it soon fell below 20%.

Roaaaaar!

The transport ship caused a deafening roar. The crew member who entered the ship had started the engine. The exhaust gas was blown out as the aircraft was surrounded by a blue sphere. A shield! The aircraft was covered with a shield and sparks flew as bullets bounced off it.

“That’s it! Now everybody get on the plane!”

Ark shouted as the burden on him decreased thanks to the shield. Then Irina screamed from inside the aircraft.

“Ark-nim!”

The moment he turned his head! A thick lightning bolt flew towards him. He hurriedly blocked it with his lightsaber and a bright light flared.

Chwajijijijik!

Ark was in an unstable posture as he blocked the lightning. His muscles spasmed as he felt electric shock from the stray lightning sparks. Ark fell to one knee as a cold voice shook the room.

“You!”

The marshal glared the arc.

“Look at what you’ve done!”

“Damn, how should I know?”

“You.....you guys.....”

The marshal raised a hand trembling with anger.

“Don’t let even one of them leave here alive!”

“I was expecting that! Galaxy Sword!”

Ark jumped up and swung his sword. The blue sword divided into dozens of pieces and headed like a wave towards the marshal. However, the marshal caused dozens of lightning bolts to rise from the ground and block the swords. The marshal scattered the swords and shouted at the Kero holding RPGs.

“Shoot! Blow up that ship!”

Pusung! Pusung! Pusung!

At the same time, 10 shells went flying. It was aimed at the airship Irina’s group was riding. The aircraft had a shield but it didn’t have the GEM system to intercept missiles.

‘If I don’t stop them then they’ll be wiped out!’

“Sword Defense!”

Ark headed towards the shells and wielded his beam sword. The shells that had been flying together spread out. They flew in different directions and exploded on rocks or other airships.

The airships that didn’t have their shields deployed had their outer walls engulfed in flames.

‘.....Success!’

The other 2 aircrafts had been weighing on his mind the most. It would be difficult for Irina’s group to escape if the other 2 airships chased after them. Therefore he had deliberately directed the trajectory of the shells towards the airships. Of course, Ark couldn’t direct all 10 shells in the direction he wanted.

Pepeng-!

One shell managed to hit the side of the transport ship. Thanks to the shield, it wasn’t a fatal hit and the ship just wobbled from side to side before regaining its balance. Irina stood at the railing of the entrance and shouted.

“Ark-nim!”

“Depart before it is too late!”

“B-but.....”

“Do you understand? Someone has to remain behind.”

Irina didn’t hesitate for long. She stared at Ark before nodding and closing the door of the aircraft. Then the aircraft started to rise up rapidly. As expected, she was a calm woman. Well, to be honest he felt secretly charmed by that.....

“Those guys are escaping! Don’t let them!”

The marshal ran around the room and shouted.

The Kero clan ran while aiming their machine gun and RPGs at the aircraft. This was why Ark had to remain!

“Your opponent is me!”

Ark ran towards where the Kero were gathered with his lightsaber. The blue sword started to rotate at a tremendous speed. Blood continuously poured out from the group of Kero. The Kero were basically troopers. If 200 of them started

shooting at once then he would be riddled with holes. But the circumstances were different in close combat. Ark dived at the Kero clan and they couldn't fire their guns accurately anymore.

–Kekek! Stop him!

–Where do I shoot? I can't fire the gun recklessly.

Of course the Kero also knew how to use a sword. However the swords were just their secondary weapons. Their crude attacks were no match for Ark's skills.

Wiiing! Seokeok!

The Kero collapsed with every swing of the lightsaber. It was like a battle between a wolf and some sheep!

"Punishment Lightning!"

The marshal started spewing out lightning. But the result wasn't too different from the guns. Ranged attacks were useful when there were no obstacles but now there were many obstacles blocking Ark's body. Ark only had to merge in with the Kero and the lightning would hit them instead.

–Kuaaaak! Marshal-nim!

10 Kero instantly turned to ash. The marshal shouted with anger.

"You stupid bastards! Get out of the way!"

But that was a stupid thing to say. Ark wouldn't obediently let the Kero back away from him. The Kero who witnessed their colleagues dying rushed back and forth with confusion. This made it easier for Ark to attack them. It was the same with the Katz. The Katz found it difficult to approach Ark when the Kero were lost in confusion.

"You stupid bastards! Ignore him! He is a dead man anyway. Concentrate on the aircraft. Shoot down that aircraft before it manages to leave!"

The marshal commanded them to attack the aircraft that was still ascending. However, the Kero couldn't ignore Ark who was wielding a sword right next to them. Of course they aimed their guns and RPGs at the ship like commanded. But Ark was only looking at one thing.

“Galaxy Sword!”

They became rags and instantly collapsed. He swept through the Kero clan for a while. The ship finally finished their vertical ascent and began to fly in earnest.

Roaaaaar!

Then another airship appeared on the other side. There were 2 airships remaining. Ark had caused considerable damage by redirecting the shells but one airship was still capable of flying. Any airship would be stocked with weapons so it would be a difficult opponent.

‘It will be dangerous if they’re caught by that. I have to stop it!’

“Sonic Sword!”

Ark caused a vacuum wave and pushed back the surrounding Kero. He took out the air board and flew full speed towards the airship.

–Kekek! He’s coming!

–He’s heading towards the airship! Block him!

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu!

The Kero clan started firing at him. There were a lot of enemies so naturally he would be hit. Of course, it wasn't that one-sided but he still received some damage. The small wounds caused his 20% health to fall to 5%. He was prepared for death but.....

‘Not yet! I’m not dead yet! I need to handle that airship!’

Ark moved in a zigzag pattern towards the airship. The airship had already rose to a height of 10 metres. Ark accelerated his airship even further. And he stretched out his arms before spinning the air board 180 degrees. He used the air board as a foothold to leap!

“I got it!”

He grabbed the bottom part of the airship. Ark used the railing to pull himself up and opened the door of the airship. And he jumped straight into the cockpit.

“Heok! What, what the?”

A baffled exclamation fell from Ark’s mouth.

“Eh? Eh?”

The pilot was also puzzled.

“W-why are you riding in here? Didn’t you board the other airship?”

“Why me?”

It was a hamster screaming. The one flying the airship was surprisingly Tori.

“If I escaped with them then I would just be returned to Stael! Am I crazy? Why would I escape from jail just to return there? I hate you!”

“But the key to the airship.....”

“Who do you think I am?” It is easy to hack the system of an old airship like this.”

Ark remembered when Tori took him hostage. He hadn’t paid any attention to it at the time.....

His appearance also didn’t look like Tori. A sneaky hamster like that had the cleverness to escape alone.

“You lousy bastard, do you want to live?”

“Of course I do! Why would you ask something like that.....”

Pepeng-!

There was an explosion and the ship shook violently. Tori screamed with surprise.

“Huk! R-RPG! Those guys noticed!”

“Dammit, let’s talk after we escape. Activate the shield!”

“If I could then I would’ve deployed the shield already! The shield isn’t working thanks to that shell you redirected here a while ago. Damn! Why did you do that? I could’ve gotten away while you guys were beating at each other!”

“Talking like that.....”

“What? What? Am I lying? You’re a pioneer! If you die you can just resurrect again! But I’m just a hamster! It is better for you to die instead of me!”

“Shut up you little rodent! If you have time to talk nonsense then accelerate! Do you really want to die?”

“The acceleration device broke down!”

“.....Think of a method to escape with this airship.”

“It’s your fault!”

“.....Are you blaming everything on me?”

Pepeng-!

Then a warning sound was heard from the cockpit. A red message flashed on the glass.

-An attack!

The exterior of the hull has been 50% damaged!

The ether fusion engine and warp propeller has been damaged!

If the fusion engine continues receiving damage then there is the risk of overheating and an explosion!

“Ugh! We’re screwed! Screwed!”

“Is there nothing you can do?”

“If there was a way then I would’ve done it!”

Tori shouted as he grabbed his head. Then a Kero aiming its RPG caught his eye. If the airship was hit by the RPG then there would be an explosion! Ark and Tori would be turned to ashes along with the airship.

‘If we’re going to die anyway!’

“Get out of the way!”

Ark pushed Tori away and sat in the cockpit. And he grabbed the joystick with both hands. The ship that had been rising fell towards the ground. At the same time, a roar was heard from the upper part of the airship. A moving target required prediction to be hit. The shell missed once the airship suddenly descended. Fortunately the situation was resolved for the moment.....

“Ugh! What are you doing? Are you trying to commit suicide?”

Tori screamed as the airship approached the ground. Just before the airship

was about to hit the ground!

“Hold onto something!”

Ark tugged at the joystick. At the same time, the falling airship vertically lifted upwards. However the bottom of the airship scraped against the ground! The Kero located there were crushed by the bottom of the airship. Then the airship started surging at a tremendous speed!

–Kekek? T-the airship.....!

–Avoid it!

The Kero who hadn't been crushed screamed and scattered all over the place. No, just before they could scatter!

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

The airship struck the Kero clan with a loud roar. The scene that occurred after that was horrific. The airship that weighed hundreds of tons were instantly crushed. Thus the airship won in the conflict with the dozens of Kero.

“You! I won't let you do as you like!”

The marshal formed lightning between both hands!

“Take this! Punishment Lightning!”

And the lightning flew towards the airship!

Snap!

.....The airship had disappeared. The marshal couldn't imagine what had happened. He had tried to stop the enemy vessel.....but his head wasn't that good. Meanwhile Ark had no interest in the marshal.

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

“Fly off! Soar!”

He rushed forward and was about to crash into the rock! Ark pulled the joystick roughly and shouted. Just before the airship was about to hit the wall, Ark manipulated so that it rose along the wall like it was following a runway. The nose of the airship frequently scratched against the rock wall. And all noise disappeared for a moment.

“We escaped!”

The airship finally escaped from the mine.

–*What?*

While Ark and Tori were escaping from the mine. The repercussions of his actions were spreading millions of kilometres away. In the centre of the pentagram created by the red rays of light. But there was a distortion and the light suddenly scattered in every direction.

–*Why?*

–*The space boundary is fading!*

–*No! Not yet! My body hasn't passed through the gate yet!*

–*Stop! The gate can't lose its chain of energy!*

–*Stop it! Stop it! Stop it!*

The black sun had appeared in the centre of the pentagram. The existences gathered around the black sun started warping. Their bodies burned up as the pentagram started collapsing.

–*For the sake of the clan!*

–*In order to punish the immoral creatures in this star system!*

–*Protect the body!*

When the black sun had decreased to half its size. The light from another planet suddenly disappeared. Amara's collapsed caused a chain explosion along the other rays of light. The black sun started to disappear again.

Ohhhh! Ohhhh! Ohhhh!

Painful cries! The beings within the pentagram started screaming.

—No! No! No!

—Hundreds of years! I've been waiting hundreds of years.....

—Wrong. Retreat. We're being drawn in!

The beings cried out and started scattering. At the same time, the entire pentagram collapsed and the black sun disappeared.

On the 3rd planet Kadanal in the Harmadon constellation.

A man within a mine was looking up at the sky.

"I somehow managed to prevent it in time."

It was a warrior with black hair and an eyepatch on one eye. At his side was a disk that had been broken in half. And hundreds of Kero corpses were scattered around him.

"But the light from Amara seemed to have scattered before I broke the gate energy generator. It is impossible for the gate energy generator to just break..... is there someone on Amara with the same purpose? There should be hardly anyone who knows about this. Well, things turned out easier than I thought so I have no complaints....."

The warrior clicked his tongue and murmured.

"Someone broke it before me so my pride is slightly injured."

“Amara isn’t that far from here so should I go visit it?”

A huge figure in a hood asked as they approached.

“Amara.....”

The warrior with black hair stared at Amara shining in the night sky for a while. However he shook his head and turned around.

“It doesn’t matter. There is no guarantee I will meet them if I go now. If we have the same purpose then we’ll meet in the near future.”

“That is an enjoyment for the future.”

“That’s right.”

The black haired warrior stretched and smiled.

“Let’s return to Kwain. I should have a drink after using my power for so long.”

“As expected from Captain! I’ve been waiting for that.”

The huge figure replied with a thumbs up.

Roaaaaar!

A shadow appeared out of a sandstorm behind them. A large skeleton design was carved on the battleship.

-Your level has risen!

Shortly after crushing the Kero with the airship. The message appeared with a cheerful melody. But Ark couldn’t afford to rejoice.

“What, what the? What is this?”

Ark thought he finally managed to escape once they emerged from the mine. But the height continued to increase no matter how much he yanked at the control lever. A red message appeared on the screen.

-The ether fusion engine has received serious damage and the output is falling!

<50%....45%.....40%.....>

“What happened to cause this?”

“You’re not in a position to say something like that!”

Tori shouted from behind him.

“What on earth is going through your mind? Where do you think the tank of the flying boat is? Of course it will break if you keep on scratching the bottom against the ground! It can’t fly 10 km in this state! What do you think would happen if we crash now? What will you do? You can’t do anything!”

“You could at least help.....”

“Get out of the way!”

Tori pushed Ark away and sat in the cockpit. He manipulated the panel and one message flashed after the other.

-The inspection program of the airship has been started.

-Ether fusion engine recovery system-ERROR!

-Flight control system-ERROR!

-Anti-gravity gas control system-ERROR!

Error messages continuously rose!

“Ugh! Wrong! Nothing is working properly! We’re screwed!”

Tori grabbed his hair and started screaming.

-Photon movement engine-NORMAL.

A blue message was sandwiched between the red messages. Ark grabbed Tori who had fallen into a state of panic and shouted.

“There’s something left! Something is still working!”

“What?”

Tori’s face warped.

“You ignorant bastard! Do you know what this is? It is the photon movement engine! It is a technique to switch from gas to photon movement. It is suicide to use photon movement when the shield, control system and even the balance system isn’t working!”

“Then what will happen if this ship falls? Do you think you can still live?”

“T-that....”

“This is a plan of desperation! We have to be prepared for death!”

Ark bit his lip before pressing the button for photon movement on the dashboard.

“Huk! What did you do? I-I’m not prepared for death!”

“It is too late. Be prepared.”

Buuuuong!

The airship shook violently as it was wrapped in light. Within a few minutes, it had decomposed into small particles and flew through the sky. The landscape couldn't be seen while the airship was using photon movement. The feeling of moving through a pipe at a huge speed.....

Ku ku ku ku....kwa kwang!

The airship suddenly vibrated.

Space 2: Galaxian Now.....

SPACE 2. Galaxian Now.....

“How are you doing? I’m Lee Ji-un from the game exclusive news.”

A young man bowed and began to talk.

“The weather is becoming more and more hot. While the discomfort index is steadily rising with this heat wave, I have some news to tell you. If you listen to the game exclusive news then you’ll know I’m a fan. I have Jung Hye-sun here this week to help me talk about the game news.”

“Hello. I’m Jung Hye-Sun.”

A pretty, female celebrity smiled and answered.

“This is the first time I’ve been on the game exclusive news but I’ll work hard.”

“Hye-sun ssi is quite modest. Female artists in virtual reality games are quite rare but I heard that Hye-sun ssi is a pretty talented 1st generation gamer.”

“Omo, you seem to be talking about my age.”

“Ah.....yes, I’ll be careful in more words from now on.”

The broadcast began with a light joke from the host. Lee Ji-un then skillfully changed the topic.

“Anyway, I’m in a good mood now that I have the beautiful, young Jung Hye-sun here with me. I’m thankful that you chose to come on the game exclusive news. Hye-sun ssi, what is the first piece of news today?”

“It is Galaxian.”

“Isn’t this the SF fantasy game that has been causing a hot topic for a while?”

“Yes. Today at 6 o’clock in the morning, Galaxian entered Episode II.”

“That really is very hot news. But it feels a bit abrupt. Doesn’t a new episode mean the game system will change due to a large scale update? But information about Episode II was never released on the homepage of the publisher, Successful Future.”

“Successful Future is a game company that traditionally advocates mysticism. In addition to providing game content, users could find hidden content or solutions. Successful Future has been like that since the founding of the company. We requested to interview them about Episode II many times but it was refused.”

“That’s that mean no one knows any information about Episode II?”

“Then it wouldn’t be called a scoop would it?”

Jung Hye-sun replied with a smile. Her gaze turned towards a large monitor in the back. The monitor showed man shining stars in the universe.

“That screen is showing Galaxian right now. Unlike a typical fantasy game, the scale of a game with SF as the background is completely different. The appeal of Galaxian is its huge scale galactic adventures. But do you see that unusual pattern on the edge of the galaxy?”

“Yes, there is speculation that it is associated with Episode II.”

Jung Hye-sun answered as it zoomed in to the pattern of red light. The red lights from the planets connected to form a pentagram!

“Just before this Episode II begun, this pattern was observed in the Harmadon constellation to the north of the constellation. You can’t tell when watching the screen but it is estimated to be tens of millions of kilometres large.”

“Tens of millions of kilometres.....that is terrible.”What is it?”

“Like I already mentioned, Successful Future won’t disclose any general

information related to the game. But how could I be the host of the game exclusive news if I accept that answer? So I called some help. Park Eun-woo is currently working as a programmer for a famous game publisher and Kwak Kyung-in who is an active game reviewer for the SF and fantasy genres.

“Oh, I’m sorry I only discovered your identities now.”

Lee Ji-un made a light joke.

“What do you two think it is?”

“A secret weapon.”

Park Eun-woo answered without thinking about it. Lee Ji-un had an exaggerated surprised expression on his face.

“A secret weapon? That is a weapon?”

“Yes, when Galaxian’s service first started the federation was in a conflict with the Rama. The setting is basically a space war between humans and aliens. However, the war between these two species is limited to the Bellin constellation at the moment. That area isn’t even 1/100 of the whole galaxy. And the amount of users participating in the war is 1/1000. This situation isn’t good for the publishers who put their efforts into making the battlefield.”

“I guess.”

Lee Ji-un spoke in a voice that encouraged Park Eun-woo.

“That’s right. In order to gather a lot of users on the battlefield, they decided to use a secret weapon. Do you see the enormous size? If the weapon works properly then it will probably exert its power over the whole galaxy. The field that was confined to the Bellin constellation might expand throughout the whole galaxy. Even players who were indifferent to the war might have no choice but to get involved.”

“But according to Jung Hye-sun ssi, that giant circle didn’t even last for 10 minutes. There are also no significant anomalies on the planets around it.”

“That was just a trial run.”

Par Eun-woo naturally replied. Then Kwak Kyung-in who had just been listening scratched his head and opened his mouth.

“Can I say something?”

“Oh, yes Kwak Kyung-in ssi. Please say it.”

“I have a different conclusion from Park Eun-woo. Park Eun-woo must not know that much of the galaxy if he is claiming it is a secret weapon of the federation or the Rama. The federation, Rama and Aschulat have to keep their battlefields within a certain area due to the special treaty. It is impossible for them to produce a weapon that is millions of kilometres large.”

“So you’re saying it isn’t a secret weapon? Secret weapon, don’t you know the meaning of the word secret?”

“70% of the members in my cafe are Galaxian users.”

Kwak Kyung-in interrupted Park Eun-woo and continued.

“A majority of them have already gained a reputation in the frontier and several of them sailed on ships towards those planets when the incident occurred. But not one of those users insisted that it might be a weapon.”

“Then what does Kwak Kyung-in ssi think it is?”

“The 3rd race.”

“The 3rd race?”

“Yes. Apart from humans there are currently 24 species that can be selected in Galaxian. I think Episode II is the process to add a new species and area. The

magic circle is a type of portal to allow that species to enter the galaxy.”

“What basis do you have for that reasoning?”

“Then is your insistence on a classified weapon well-founded?”

“When looking at the game publisher’s position.....”

“Is Park Eun-woo involved in publishing Galaxian?”

“Kwak Kyung-in also isn’t the game publisher.”

“I’m a user.”

“Are you the only one playing the game? I’m also a user!”

“What level are you?”

“In the 90s!”

“I pass level 130 not long ago.”

Kwak Kyung-in laughed and added.

“I’m the CEO of a company that owns 4 destroyer class ships and have 270 members. I can’t agree with Park Eun-woo’s earlier words that the new content is to expand the battlefield. Like Park Eun-woo said, the scale of the battlefield is only 1/100 of the galaxy. In my opinion, the battlefield is like a type of mini game. I don’t think anything of it other than teaching PVP tips to beginners. Most of the users are gathering in the space frontier that takes up 90% of the galaxy. The users there are the real survivors. Users who couldn’t leave Istana or the Bellin constellation isn’t seeing the real Galaxian.”

“Are you saying I’m not really playing?”

“I saying we’re seeing different worlds. Galaxian isn’t a small world like Park Eun-woo thinks.”

“Those words are serious!”

“Now now, Park Eun-woo ssi, Kwak Kyung-in ssi, please calm down.”

Lee Ji-un quickly jumped in once the atmosphere dissolved.

“It really is a hot war of words. This is evidence of Galaxian’s popularity.”

“Yes, if Successful Future intended to cause shock with Episode II then they were successful. Right now the internet in the 12 countries that Galaxian is operating in is heating up. Anyway, I think we’ll have to watch the result a little bit more.”

Jung Hye-sun and Lee Ji-un skillfully summed up the situation. Lee Ji-un nodded with a satisfied expression and continued.

“Next up we will be talking about the users who have been showing a hot momentum in Galaxian. The popularity of Galaxian means there is a great interest in the users that are standing out. Hye-sun ssi, please explain a bit more.”

“Yes.”

Jung Hye-sin explained with a sassy expression.

“The ranking in the game doesn’t distinguish between federation, Rama or Aschulat and is based on the user’s level, achievements, fame, recognition *etc.* Among the top 50 there are 21 Korea players included. That is amazing when considering that Galaxian has services in 12 countries.”

“It shows the strength of a country strong in gaming.”

“But recently Europe and China who are traditionally strong in gaming have been rising with a terrifying momentum.”

“I heard that the number of pro gamers in Europe and China are increasing. This is a result that reflects the trend.”

“Yes, especially the European user called Masherion and the Chinese user

called Ruchon who reached the top 30 in a week. Masherion was the winner of the power division in the world fighting action games tournament a few years ago. His experience means he has never been beaten in a 1 on 1 battle yet.”

A user was displayed on the monitor while Jung Hye-sun was talking. He had a sleek body and was equipped with weapons that looked like knuckles.

-Masherion- <Europe>

Ranking: 26 From: Galactic Federation

Final confirmation of level: 124

Uniqueness: Presumed to have received the fighter body coating. He has been undefeated in a 1 on 1 battle so far. He belongs to Laius, one of the 4 large companies in the federation.

* This material is being broadcasted with the permission of the user.

“We have no data on the previous career of the Chinese user Ruchon. There is no data on his combat abilities but he is the chairman of the 4 large companies in China and is using its capital to capture the space frontier. He is an ambitious person with dreams of making it to the top 10 rankings. Unlike Masherion, his fighting skills are unknown but he is a user people should pay attention to.”

-Ruchon- <China>

Ranking: 22 From: Aschulat

Final confirmation of level: 140

Uniqueness: The Chairman of the 4 large businesses in China. Not much is known about Ruchon other than that.

He doesn't want to reveal his character to the public.

"I'm amazed. I'm starting to feel like it's real."

Lee Ji-un said with an amazed voice as he watched the materials on the monitor.

"Galaxian has already started its service for 5 months."

"Are there any Korean users who entered the top 50 this week?"

"Of course."

Two users appeared on the monitor. One was a user holding just a long sword while the other one carried a grenade language, a revolver, a launcher stinger and was wearing thick, heavy armour.

-Arion- <South Korea>

Ranking: 38 From: Rama

Final confirmation of level: 121

Uniqueness: Presumed to have received a physical type body coating. According to recent witness testimonies, he took out 10 level 100 monsters by himself. He also took out a pirate ship attacking him and is gaining a lot of awareness in the frontier. His whereabouts are currently unknown.

-Ferguson- <South Korea>

Ranking: 18 From: Galactic Federation

Final confirmation of level: 121

Uniqueness: CEO of a private business called Merchant's Soul. A trooper wearing equipment that is estimated to be worth more than 10,000 gold. The terrible attack power of the superior equipment is designed to take out a large amount of monsters. His business is also actively exploring planets and trade.

"There are formidable Korean users."

"This country isn't known as being strong in gaming for nothing."

Jung Hye-sun replied with a smile.

“But the 12 countries are all in one server so it kind of feels like a match against countries.”

“Yes, the starting position is different in each country but they are all devoted to levelling themselves up and exploring the space frontier. The beginning stages of Galaxian don’t feel like much. People from different nations are gathering at the frontier so it is natural to feel like it has turned into a competition.”

“Will it be the same in the future?”

“Few users in the top 50 have directly conflicted with each other yet. It is still too early to judge who will be enemies. But.....”

“The universe is rapidly developing so peace won’t last for long. And that means there will be many opportunities for countries to fight.”

“That’s right.”

“This is like when we’re preparing for the World Cup.”

Lee Ji-un suddenly remembered something and asked with an interested expression.

“But wasn’t there a user on Istana who captured quite a bit of attention? Ark who is called Beltana’s Hero. There is a lot of speculation that he might be the legendary gamer Ark. Have you checked it?”

“That.....”

Jung Hye-sun flinched and hesitated for a bit. Then she smiled and said.

“It isn’t confirmed if he is the Ark from New World. But that Ark is a director in Global Exos so there is no reason for him to play Galaxian.”

“That’s right. Personally that is quite disappointing. I’m a fan of Ark. Hundreds of people have the same name in Galaxian so it could be someone else. Still, the person using the name Ark is a South Korean player so I’m looking forward to his actions in the future. I heard he had some significant achievements on Athamas but there isn’t a comprehensive evaluation on him yet. I hope he aspires to reach the top 50.”

“I agree.”

Jung Hye-sun replied with a laugh. Somehow loneliness was buried beneath her laugh.

Beep-.

There was an electronic sound and the screen was turned off. A group of people in a conference room were staring at one person. The recipient of their gaze was Moon Ji-hun. They were the Emergency Planning department formed from members of the National Intelligence Service in order to counter Lucifer’s terrorism. However his face was confused as he turned off the TV. It was due to the broadcast of the game exclusive news.

“What do you think?”

“.....I have no words.”

“Isn’t it a problem if you speak so ambiguously?”

A man in his 60s said in a nervous voice.

“The reason we are gathered here is due to the unprecedented act of terrorism caused by an artificial intelligence. A budget was committed in order to stop this. Section Chief Mun of the National Intelligence Service should know better than me.”

“Yes.”

Moon Ji-hun nodded and bowed. This was definitely an unprecedented situation. He never imagined something like this would happen. For a mere computer program to take control of a nuclear power plant and threaten the government?

It was something from a SF movie yet it was actually happening in real life. The even more absurd thing was the AI's requirements.

—If another user reaches the ultimate goal in Galaxian ahead of me then I will return control of it to the government. However I can't guarantee the safety of the nuclear power plant if I reach the goal first. I will also be participating in my own activities.

‘The survival of the country depends on the outcome of a game.....’

Moon Ji-hun thought it was a joke when he first received the report. Honestly he couldn't accept it. But that was the actual situation. He didn't want to believe it but a scene from a SF movie had actually happened. Thus the Emergency Planning committee was formed. Right now members of related departments were gathered in the meeting room. And the person in charge was Moon Ji-hun. There were two methods that Moon Ji-hun had devised. The first was to take advantage of users. His plan was to just experts in other virtual reality games to defeat Lucifer in Galaxian. However that was just Moon Ji-hun's insurance plan.

‘I can't just leave this to civilians. No, they're not even ordinary civilians. Most successful gamers are reclusive, loner types or social misfits. I can't leave the mission to these type of people. It is ridiculous to leave the future of the country to pathetic humans like that.’

He was a person in a public office. He also had self-confidence from

protecting the country. There was no way he could leave a national emergency in the hands of gamers.

‘I have to invest time and money into the game. Then it will be more beneficial to spend that time and money on outstanding people. The people with appropriate qualifications should settle his matter!’

That was the second plan Moon Ji-hun came up with! Therefore he selected 300 elite agents from the NIS. At least 15 billion won of the budget was allocated for ‘Lucifer hunting.’ The personnel were selected carefully.

‘The world consists of 1% elites leading the other 99% population. And these people are part of the 1% elite. The 99% of the population playing the game can’t compare to them. This is the core of my plan.’

Moon Ji-hun met the gamers first and immediately chose the government agents afterwards. But things turned out opposite to what Moon Ji-hun thought. He had planned to use the gamers to help the Lucifer Hunting personnel. However, the majority of gamers rejected Moon Ji-hun’s proposal. Several users, including Ark placed some requirements despite the space of emergency.

‘I can’t believe the brats addicted to playing games. Those guys have no sense of commitment so I’ll have to depend on the elite personnel. The country is in our hands. I’ll show that intelligence agent the power of our country.’

At first it seemed to be proceeding well.

–All units have passed the space station and entered the planet.

–10 to 1. 10 teams have each been committed to the federation, Rama and Aschulat!

–Each team is dedicated to hunting in a party and levelling up!

-We've breached level 30!

-Each member has received a specific body coating to ensure the balance of the team!

The results were good! Each member showed a noticeable growth. It was natural. The Lucifer Hunting team consisted of the mental and physical elite. Furthermore, Galaxian was like modern warfare through the use of swords and firearms. And they were all members of the NIS who had received military education. They received the support of the country and could play the game night and day. Thus in the early stages, 20 of the members of the Lucifer Hunting team managed to reach the top 50. However that situation changed after 3 months.

-A team, they engaged with a bandit group and were completely destroyed!

-B team has engaged with a group of monsters and were completely destroyed!

The reports kept on coming in. They started to struggle once they reached a certain level. Moon Ji-hun was puzzled by the result. There are several reasons for it. The first was that the team members were all military soldiers. Of course, this was a significant advantage. A military trained team could get used to the battle system in virtual reality games easier. The space bugs and Nakuma in the novice areas were no match for their organizational tactics. But that situation changed once they entered the Outlands.

It was filled with a bizarre environment and monsters! Once again, the soldiers were trained in modern warfare using specific tactics and Korea's terrain. Suddenly a cactus would spout electricity or a huge 10 metre monster would appear out of the ground to eat them. The textbook tactics that they learnt was actually a nuisance to them.

–Use the terrain to shoot!

It was something they learnt in the army. They laid down and shot. And.....

Kwaaaaah! Bujik!

The giant monster repelled the bullets and they died. They suffered such situations a few times before learning that military tactics didn't work. However, they were the 'elite.' Their body automatically moved using the ingrained military training before they could think. That wasn't the only problem. Skill was just as important as levels in the game. Although NPCs sometimes taught the skills, most users created new skills themselves through steady practice. However, they were the 'elite.'

The soldiers couldn't imagine learning combat skills from civilians (NPCs). In addition, their lack of flexibility meant they dismissed the notion of repeating actions many times. In conclusion, they lacked understanding of the game. In terms of tactics, the soldiers were incomparable to other users. But that wasn't the only thing required in a game. Learning a large number of skills, maximizing the capabilities of items, finding and completing new quests, all of these things had a large impact on character growth. That was the reason why their growth suddenly to slow down.

'A virtual reality game isn't as easy as I thought.'

Moon Ji-hun was forced to admit it. Nevertheless, the average level of the soldiers was 120. Despite raising their levels ignorantly, 10 of them were still among the top 50. They really could be called the elite.....

Then one of the members in the meeting room began to talk.

"Chief Mun, what is the purpose of establishing the Lucifer Hunting group?"

"It is to find out Lucifer's ultimate goal in Galaxian and to prevent him from

reaching that goal.”

“And the outcome?”

“Nothing.”

“Yes, there isn’t anything. We committed a budget of 15 billion and 300 elite agents only to get no results. Their growth was fast at first but after 5 months they are being pushed by other users. The purpose of establishing the Lucifer Hunting group isn’t to create high level characters. Life Chief Mun said, it is to stop Lucifer. It doesn’t matter if they’re level as long as they can stop Lucifer. In order to do that, information is necessary. Chief Mun who works in the NIS knows that better than anyone.”

“Of course.”

“Then are you aware of what is happening within Galaxian? Something serious happened within the last day. Not only did we not detect any warning signs ahead of time, we had to hear about it through the TV.”

This was the reason for the committee meeting. A huge event had happened within Galaxian. The government had prepared a plan to stop Lucifer but they never knew about the event before they saw it on the game exclusive news. They had no excuses. However, a large budget and many personnel had been committed to this project. No excuse would be accepted. When Moon Ji-hun couldn’t say anything, the committee member began to talk again.

“I can only come to one conclusion. In our present state it will be difficult to accomplish our goals. So I think staff reinforcement is necessary.”

“Staff reinforcement.....”

“We have to hire more specialized personnel.”

The committee member handed several forms to Moon Ji-hun and continued.

“This is who we were thinking of. Please review them so they can be incorporated within a few days.”

Moon Ji-hun silently unfolded the papers.

-Team leader of developing a new game, Hwang Ju-ryeong.

-Professor of game creation at S university, Lee Cheol-yong.

*-Profession of special environment tactics at Korea's Nation Defense university
Kim Woo-jeong.....*

These experts were definitely required considering the circumstances. However there was one name that stuck out to Moon Ji-hun. Moon Ji-hun frowned at the piece of paper and asked.

“This man is a police officer?”

“Is there a problem?”

“This NIS operation is conducted in cooperation with the military. Any necessary talent is supplied by them. If we add a police officer.....”

“It is a problem because he is a police officer?”

“No but.....”

The NIS and Department of Defense had joined forces for this project. Asking for help from the police was like a blow to their ego. But the next statement caught Moon Ji-hun's attention.

“I know what Chief Mun is thinking. But this situation isn't just for a specific government office. It is literally a state of emergency. And to be honest, he is a well-qualified person for this mission. He is the cyber investigation team leader who investigates criminals in virtual reality games. And he has a good track record. He is more of an expert than the Lucifer Hunting crew in that regard. But that isn't the only reason why I recommended him.”

“There’s something else?”

“He has experience fighting Lucifer in New World.”

“Lucifer.....”

Moon Ji-hun’s eyes narrowed and he looked back at the paperwork.

-Gangnam police station, cyber-investigations team leader Lee Myung-ryong.

That was the name on the resume.

Kwaaaaah!

A huge roar shook the space. It came from the Kraken, the giant monster 100 metres large! This is a A+ ranking space monster who hid underground on asteroids and ate any pioneers who came across it. However the Kraken was in its death throes.

“That guy is reaching his limit!”

“Kill him before he hides underground again!”

“Concentrate your firepower on him! Pour all shells!”

And dozens of shells poured out! Flames soared and black blood flowed from the body of the Kraken. The Kraken struggled until its last moments when it took a rough breath.

“The final blow! Take this!”

A user clad in heavy armour rushed towards the Kraken. The revolver launcher in his hands spewed a jet of flames 100 metres long! The trigger was pulled dozens of times and grenades poured out.

Tung! Tung! Tung! Tung!

The grenade exploded on the Kraken's head! The Kraken swung its giant tentacles around from the pain. However, the user instantly changed directions and continuously aimed the grenade at its head. The Kraken eventually fell down from the grenades and was engulfed in flames.

"Huhuhu, the Kraken has no choice but to be roasted."

The user lifted his steaming revolver and laughed. And 2 users cheered from among the gathered soldiers and ran forward.

"As expected of Hyung-nim!"

"Awesome! Totally terrific!"

"Huhuhu, these children. It is natural. Didn't you see the user rankings announced on the game exclusive news? I am rank 18, 18."

The user wearing the thick armour was Ferguson. Not long ago the user rankings for Galaxian was released and he was ranked 18th. The users with small physiques nodded at Ferguson's words.

"Of course we saw!"

"When considering how much we've suffered....sob."

"Children, calm down. I told you. This is going to be our new world."

"It is like Hyung-nim said."

"To be honest, I couldn't imagine the result when Hyung-nim told us to give up our previous game and join Galaxian. Yet Hyung-nim is ranked 18th!"

"I told you. It was a problem involving career choices. Don't we have a game background of several years? I've devoted 20 years to playing games. Once I make up my mind then this much is simple. I honestly don't like the number 18. That means there are 17 people above me.....that's not good enough."

“But that will change next week.”

“Of course. The tungsten mine on this planet is going to be ours.”

Ferguson looked at the Kraken’s body with a warm look. That’s why he had fought with the Kraken. While sailing near this asteroid, he accidentally discovered that there was a tungsten mine on it. There wasn’t a large deposit but tungsten was an expensive mineral! Ferguson hired mercenaries and was finally able to defeat the Kraken after a long battle.

“But it’s not over yet.”

“I’m aware of that. I need to report the tungsten mine in order to claim ownership of it.”

“Yes and we also need to gather mine equipment and investors.”

“We will be busy for a while.”

“Once Hyung-nim receives ownership and gains money from it, your ranking will quickly jump.”

“Congratulations Hyung-nim!”

“These children, do you think I’m working alone? It is thanks to you guys for believing in me.”

“Will you climb straight to number 1?”

“It isn’t beyond my reach.”

Ferguson replied with an elated expression. Then one of the men said with an uneasy expression.

“But Hyung-nim, what about the mention of Ark on the game exclusive news?”

“Ark?”

Ferguson's expression was offended this time.

"Sheesh, why did you have to bring up that bastard's name when the atmosphere was so good? They said that Beltana's Hero isn't the real Ark."

"They said it was highly unlikely. But if he is the real one....."

"You don't need to worry. This isn't New World. It is Galaxian. There is no guarantee that he will do well here. Even if he is Beltana's Hero, he wasn't even part of the top 50 rankings. That is evidence that he isn't really inside Galaxian. Isn't that right? In fact, I hope that Beltana's Hero is the real Ark. So I can prove that I'm stronger than him."

"Ohh! Hyung-nim, how wonderful! How cool!"

"Huhuhu, these children. It is natural. Just believe in Hyung-nim. I'll show you a new world!"

"Yes! We will only believe and follow Hyung-nim!"

"Now, let's head to the council!"

Ferguson turned his body around. Then the two users shouted to the soldiers.

"Hyung-nim said to head to the council! Ready the airship! Let's depart!"

A giant airship moved up from behind the hill after hearing them. The airship had a '\$' glyph on the tail and was the sign of Ferguson's business, Merchant's Soul! Ferguson looked at the staff of the airship and said in a cavalier voice.

"I want to thank you for your efforts. This tungsten mine is now owned by Merchant's Soul. Bring your food and drinks onto the airship! We will celebrate while heading to the council!"

"Waaahhhhhhhh!"

"Hyung-nim is the best!"

The crew cheered with joy. The airship started flying across the universe.

“We are the champions of the universe! The men who sail across the universe! Courage, passage and dreams as we cross the boundless space of the galaxy! A man has to be tough in the universe! To fight! To fight!”

The sound of sailors singing came from the airship as it was wrapped in light. In the next minute, the light disappeared along with the airship.

Space 3: Unconfirmed Field

SPACE 3. Unconfirmed Field

‘Why did this happen.....?’

Ark sighed and looked around. He had tried to use photon movement to escape. But like Tori said, if there wasn't a perfect balance between systems when using photon movement then there could be an accident. Let alone speak about flying properly.

Ku ku ku ku....kwa kwang!

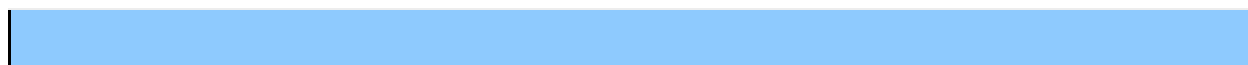
There was the sound of something breaking during the photon movement. The sound was of the gas overloading. Thus photon movement stopped. At the same time, gas and metal parts floated in the air. Ark was vertically dropping! The airship was turning into fine dust. It was thanks to Tori that the crisis was conquered.

“No! I'm Tori! I can't die in a place like this!”

Tori screamed and ran around frantically banging on the dash. The airship managed to fly 20 more kilometres despite the metal parts falling off before crash landing.

‘It really isn't easy to be idle in Galaxian.’

He knew from his previous encounters that Tori was skilled. Anyway, they didn't manage to escape from Amara but they didn't need to worry about the Katz and Kero. Photon movement might've stopped but it was triggered for a short while. They had probably flown thousands of kilometres. It would be difficult to chase after them with the state of the remaining airship. However the crucial thing was.....



-Information about the current location could not be determined.

Ark didn't know where he was. The Nymphé grasped the GPS location from the federation's satellites. But this was a planet on the space frontier. An artificial satellite from the federation couldn't orbit around Amara. If he steadily explored an undeveloped planet then the Nymphé could update the region information and grasp the location but they had used photon movement. He didn't know how far away they were from the mine. There was one method. It was to use the coordinates tracker mounted on the airship. However.....

"How about it?"

"How about it? What are you saying? What are your eyes like?"

"It looks quite serious?"

"That's right you asshole!"

Tori snapped angrily at Ark. The airship that Ark and Tori had rode on.....pieces of metal were missing and it was pouring out smoke. The airship was battered by being hit by RPGs, scraping the bottom against the Kero and using photon movement. It was crumpled like a piece of paper. But the more serious problem was the interior.

"This is in a completely sad state! Do you know what I mean? The inner equipment is like a porridge! It is like all the parts have been put into a blender!"

"Why are you angry at me?"

"Then? Who should I be angry at?"

"Did I do something wrong?"

“How can you say that? Dammit, if you hadn’t rode on the airship then I could’ve escaped without them noticing! Then the airship wouldn’t have been broken!”

“What about me?”

“How should I know? You could go straight to hell!”

Tori spat on the ground and glared.

“You did it before! You always interfere! I could’ve gone unnoticed in the museum if it wasn’t for you! Then I was sent to Stael and suffered harassment from those damn cats! I started to look like this! Now you ruined my escape with the airship! Why are you like the mortal enemy that is always interfering with my life? Get out and die! No, just die right here!”

Ark also had a lot to say about these claims. The reason Ark needed to rob the museum in the first place was because of Tori. Thanks to that Ark was sent to the -50 degrees Beltana where he died from starvation several times. Ark wouldn’t have experienced all of that if it wasn’t for Tori. But Ark didn’t question it closely. There was no point in getting into an argument about it. Ark knew a more effective method than words.

“What? What do you mean? Don’t make up excuses! You’re not the one punched in the mouth!”

Tori grabbed his collar and flipped out.

“I’ve been thinking.....”

Ark sighed and looked at Tori.

“Are you afraid of the Katz?”

“W-what? Why did you suddenly mention the Katz?”

“Scary. You’re scared of them. Didn’t you become this ugly because the Katz

kept on harassing you? Of course you would be afraid when considering the natural relationship between a cat and a hamster.”

“So why are you suddenly talking about the Katz? You’re so weird! Do you want to die?”

“That’s not it. This is a very important issue.”

“Important issue?”

“I’m not scared of the Katz. I’m a man. A cat is just something for me to pet. Didn’t you see? I took care of so many Katz in the mine.”

“Y-yes? So what?”

“So I’ll make a diagram of the relationship between me, you and the Katz.”

Ark squatted on the ground and used a small stone to draw.

Tori <Katz <Ark

“You are weaker than the Katz, the Katz are weaker than me. You are therefore weaker than me. So here is the question. Why are you bothering me so much?”

Ark said as he stood up.

“I’ve been wondering this since we met in the prison of the mine. I could only reach one conclusion.”

“The conclusion?”

“I have no reason to tolerate it.”

“Y-you have no reason to tolerate it? What are you saying? Your eyes.....they’re dangerous! The look in them is very dangerous! R-relax! I understand your words. Yes. I might’ve been a little pushy? Yes, I understand now. So decrease some of the power in your eyes. I think I made a mistake

regarding the museum. No, I feel like I've made a huge mistake."

"So there is no reason for me to tolerate it."

Ark laughed brightly and raised his arm.

"Hyung-nim!"

Tori grabbed the hem of his pants and shouted. He had felt compassion when reunited with Tori because of his appearance. His fur had fallen out all over the place thanks to excessive stress and the previously chubby figure was so thin that it exposed his ribs. Now Ark raised his arms for 20 minutes. Tori changed into a plump body like before. This remarkable transformation was due to Ark's fists and feet. His body was beaten without a break for 20 minutes and became as plump as before. Ark's fists also made a rare, blue coloured hamster. It was Ark's amazing plastic surgery. But the real effect was on the inside not the outside.

"Hyung-nim, help me! I was temporarily insane from my stay on Stael!"

"Then the events of the museum?"

"I was too greedy and committed a sin!"

"The reason this airship broke?"

"I tried to run off without Hyung-nim. When thinking about it, I was clearly influenced by a devil! I was a crazy hamster!"

"Tell me your hopes for the future."

"What hopes would a lowly hamster like me have? I just need to follow Hyung-nim. If Hyung-nim wants then this hamster will be reborn as a dog!"

Tori shed tears as he poured out self-criticism.

'As expected from my education.'

It didn't matter if this was the medieval times or the future. He realized the truth with his summons. When thinking about Ark's experience, this guy still had a bit to go. Just one beating wouldn't be effective against this guy. The effects of this mental training had a shelf life. He would become rude again once the bruises disappeared. Therefore he had to keep it up to increase the shelf life. But being too excessive would be like a poison. And right now Ark didn't have the time to educate the hamster.

"You seem to regret it so shall I end it here today?"

"T-today?"

"You might need a refresher. So you can receive an education anytime." Because I'm a person burning to educate people."

"No! I'm fine! It will never happen!"

"It's good to be prepared."

Ark nodded with satisfaction. He sat down on the stairs at the entrance of the airship.

"So? What is the state of the airship now?"

"Yes! The most important thing is that the airship's ether fusion engine is damaged. Fortunately there are several layers protecting the engine so the fusion energy device inside hasn't malfunctioned. Next, the coordinates tracker and balance control system is damaged. According to the scanner, some parts are scattered around....."

"Then tell me simply. Can it be repaired? Or not?"

Tori frowned at Ark's question and replied.

"I might be able to repair it. But....."

"But?"

“The main system programs can be repaired by fixing or modifying the broken circuits. The problem is the parts that were damaged by the RPG. There is an emergency repair kit stored in the airship but the metal materials required to replace it is lacking.”

“So that’s why you landed.”

Ark finally understood the situation for the crash landing. Ark had attempted a crash landing when the metal pieces started falling off during the photon movement. But Tori ignored Ark’s attempts and flew it another 20 km before landing. The reason for this was because the scanner detected metal objects in the vicinity.

“If the required metal parts are repaired then you can fix it?”

“Yes, but it is just a first aid.....”

However flight would be possible. They could go to a city with a space terminal.

“Okay. Then it has been decided.”

Ark stood up and summed up the situation.

“I’ll go around the area to look for metal parts. In the meantime please repair anything that you can. I won’t be far away so contact me immediately if something happens.”

Ark trusted the airship to Tori and started searching. The place where they force landed was a very peculiar place. There were high mounds and everything was grey. There was also a large number of trees in the surrounding area. No, he wasn’t certain if they were trees. It had the appearance of wood but the trees didn’t seem to be rooted. The texture also seemed like hardened plaster.

“This is neither stone nor earth.....”

Kang! Kang!

There was a sharp sound when he hit it with the shovel. Yet it was iron. It was fairly hard but the surface was still broken by the shovel. He finally learnt the identity of the strange material when he used Clairvoyance.

“Clairvoyance!”

-Iron Mold-

Category: Fungus Danger: –

Combat Power: –

A fungus with unique properties found in certain regions of the galaxy. Like the name, the iron mold is a fungus that grows on metal. The growth rate is slow but if left for a long time then the iron mold can grow like a huge mountain.

“This is a mold?”

The mold attached to metal and could proliferate endlessly. Once again he realized that earth’s common sense didn’t apply to the universe.

“Anyway, the presence of the fungus indicates that a large amount of metal is buried here!”

However he couldn’t just blindly look. The iron mold could be stuck on one small, piece of metal and multiply like a mountain. In other words, even if he dug out a whole mountain he might only find a small piece of metal. He would

be digging forever!

“I knew it was smart to learn this.”

Ark had experienced a similar situation at Mt. Fargo. He had to search the mountain for the Murat ruins. At that time Ark had dug 100 holes but Milan significantly reduced the amount of work using the dowsing skill. It was an exploration skill to detect buried objects using two wires. Ark had a feeling at the time.

‘This is a good skill to combine with digging!’

Ark judged that after seeing it. While Ark was reconstructing S-20, he received Milan’s guidance and was finally able to learn dowsing.

-A new skill (Common Occupation ☆) has been learnt.

Dowsing (User, Passive): a technique that uses wires to detect things buried underground. The scientific reasoning behind it isn’t understood but it has a high chance of success. The benefit of dowsing is that a special machine isn’t needed. Only a pair of rods is needed for exploration so the success depends on the experience and skill of the practitioner.

<There is a 30% chance of detecting unusual items buried in the ground up to a depth of 3 metres>

The beginner's proficiency meant he had a 30% chance of success. He could only detect up to 3 metres. But that was just the beginning. He had practiced with the skill and could now detect metal pieces several metres deep.

"Okay, shall I begin?"

He took one step while holding the exploration rods.....

He concentrated and walked until the rods crossed to form a X. It tried it a few more times to increase the accuracy and to check if the rods reacted in the same spot.

"I got it! Here!"

Ark immediately took out his shovel. The iron mold was like hardened plaster. But Ark was a user who dug at -50 degrees frozen ground.

Pa pa pa pa! Pa pa pa pa!

He dug without any hesitation. He dug approximately 1 metre until he heard the sound of the shovel hitting against iron.

"Eh? What the, this is?"

Ark's eyes widened as he took off the surrounding iron mold. This was a place far away from any cities. The scanner of the airship detected some metal so he thought it was just buried iron ore. However, the metal buried under the mold was surprisingly 1 metre large. The exact purpose was unknown but it was obviously an artificially created machine part.

"Why are mechanical parts buried in a place like this?"

He had some questions but that only lasted a short while.

"This is amazing. If it is this size then I only need one piece to repair the ship. Besides, it is a machine part so it doesn't need to be smelted like iron ore."

Ark instantly embarked on the daunting task of pulling out the machine part. He shovelled at the iron mold on the surface and uncovered the rest of the metal piece.

“Pant pant pant, the size is really no joke. But if I draw it out then the rest will be simple. I can just roll it back to the airship.....”

While Ark was taking a rest.

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu! Pepeng!

Suddenly there was gunshots under the hill.

He flinched and turned away from the iron mold growing like trees. It was coming from the place where the airship crashed. At the same time he heard Tori’s voice from the Nymph.

–Hik! Hyung-nim, save me!

“What? What’s going on?”

Ark jumped up and shouted.

“Who is attacking? The Kero clan?”

–No! These are.....

Pepeng! Chwajijijijik!

Sparks soared as there was an explosion at the bottom. Then Tori’s voice was lost from the Nymph.

“Tori! Tori! Answer me! What’s going on? What people.....damn!”

Ark cursed and started running towards the airship. That airship was the only way for Ark to escape from Amara. It was the same for Tori. Ark was a warrior so he couldn’t repair the airship. If he lost the airship or Tori then he would be trapped here.

‘Dammit, I was careless. I shouldn’t have moved away from the airship!’

“Super board!”

The air board sprang out of his bag! Ark jumped on the air board and rushed at full speed. The branches of the iron mold trees grew in dense amounts so it was difficult to navigate.

“Heir’s Sword!”

Wiing! Wiing! Wiing!

The blue light flashed as the air board moved. The iron mold branches were broken every time. The blue light cut through the forest as he sprinted forward. Ark cut off the branches of the iron mold tree until he finally saw the airship. And he also saw the guys attacking the airship!

“T-those guys are?”

Ark burst out with confusion. The airship wasn’t being attacked by Kero like he expected.

The ones attacking were made out of metal and Ark never imagined he would see them in a place like this. A previous memory floated in Ark’s head.

“Nakuma!”

It was the Nakuma that he had found in Nephalim. Why were the Nakuma in a place like this? There was no room to talk about it. Once again, the Nakuma was a space creature formed out of metal parts. Metal was like food for the Nakuma. There was only one reason why they would flock to the airship. The airship was like a huge piece of meat for the Nakuma!

Ujik! Ujik! Kwadududuk!

The Nakuma flocking to the airship like hyenas as they ripped off metal parts. And there were 10 Nakuma! Fortunately Ark managed to get to the airship

before all the meat was stripped off the bones.

“Khafra Fencing 3rd style! Galaxy Sword!”

Dozens of swords spread out like a fan and pushed forward like a tidal wave. Sparks rose as the swords struck the Nakuma and the shield broke. Ark retreated on the air board after striking the Nakuma.

“Fire Eagle P-40!”

The Fire Eagle soared out from his bag. The nature of the game meant that guns dealt more damage to mechanical creatures than a lightsaber. Ark grabbed the Fire Eagle and aimed it at their heads.

“Set Bullets Shooting!”

Cheolkeok, cheolkeok, cheolkeok! Pepepeng!

The closer the distance, the more damage the shotgun did!

-Headshot!

<You have inflicted a serious blow and the enemy will receive additional 150% damage>

He managed a head shot! The Nakuma’s head fell off and it received tremendous damage. If it was the Nakuma he had fought in Nephalim then it would already be turned into scrap metal. But the Nakuma right now were 2 times larger than the ones on Nephalim. The characteristics of the Nakuma was that it would level up the more metal it ate.

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu!

The Nakuma fired its gatling gun even as it was hit in the head. But Ark also wasn't the same Ark from Nephalim. Ark used the lightsaber to block the attacks and continuously pulled the trigger of the Fire Eagle.

Pepeng! Pepeng! Pepeng!

Metal parts fell out as the muzzle was fired at the Nakuma's head. The mechanical parts dispersed and the Nakuma's movements stopped for a while.

Kiiiiii! Kiiiiii!

-Hostile behaviour detected! Risk of death! Get rid of it!

Once one of its colleagues collapsed, the Nakuma eating at the airship turned back to Ark. Dozens of bullets started to rain all over the place. Some of the high level ones were also fitted with RPGs. However Ark wasn't intimidated by bullets or shells anymore. The blue light of his sword swung down. The bullets heading towards Ark divided like the Red Sea. The electromagnetic properties of the lightsaber twisted the orbit of the bullets! Of course, there were a lot of bullets so several had no choice but to hit. But those bullets didn't pierce through Ark.

"Mind Shield!"

-The Mind Shield has been activated.

<A shield with 350 durability has been generated around the body. The shield will reduce all damage by 40~60% until the durability falls to 0.

In addition, the effect of Backstab or Sudden Blow will be nullified by 100%>

The Mind Shield covered his entire body!

“Dammit! I can’t let the Nakuma eat the airship!”

Ark rushed through the hail of bullets while using Sword Defense. He then struck the Nakuma like a whirlwind. Sparks flew and pieces of the Nakuma’s shield scattered everywhere.

“Eat this if you want metal!”

Ark quickly loaded the Fire Eagle with Armour Piercing Bullets. He spun around like a spin top and fired everywhere. Fighting with the Nakuma was basically the same as the Kero. He needed to avoid the Nakuma’s gatling gun and close the distance. The lightsaber smashed the shield while the Armour Piercing Bullets turned it into junk metal! Sometimes they would shoot RPGs but Ark was actually thankful for that.

‘Sword Defense!’

A small bullet was difficult to catch the timing to deflect it. However, the larger shell was relatively slow so there was a high probability that he could direct the orbit in the direction he wanted. That direction was naturally the Nakuma!

Pepepeng!

The RPG shell hit the Nakuma and it was turned into scrap metal. After going crazy for 10 minutes, the final Nakuma exploded into pieces and the battle ended. The battle was against 10 opponents so Ark was considerably injured. He only had 20% health left thanks to the gunshot wounds. However he couldn’t afford to take care of the wounds.

“Tori, where are you? Tori!”

“H-Hyung-nim!”

The answer came from under the airship. Tori then came rushing out of the airship with tears in his eyes.

“Woo! Hyung-nim, I thought I would die! I really thought I would die!”

Tori was making a fuss but there wasn't a single injury on his body. He probably hid as soon as the Nakuma attacked the airship. Meanwhile Ark was bleeding heavily from the wounds he received from the Nakuma.

“You bastard!”

“Hik! I-I'm sorry.”

Tori protected his head as Ark raised his fist. Ark sighed at Tori's reaction and dropped his fist. Tori looked really pitiful. If Tori hadn't hid and was killed by the Nakuma then he wouldn't be able to repair the airship. Right now Tori was just as important as the airship.

“No, well done. It would be more troublesome if you died.”

“Oh, thank you for realizing that.”

Tori answered as he stroked his chest. He didn't show a trace of shame about his ego.

‘He really has a strong talent at surviving.’

A weak guy created his own techniques to survive. Anyway, he had dealt with all the Nakuma attacking the airship. But he looked at the bony skeleton of the airship left behind by the Nakuma and sighed. However there was no need to despair yet. The Nakuma hadn't actually ate the metal parts. They just tore it and attached it to its body. If the Nakuma died then he could regain the metal parts and attach it back to the airship.

“The problem is the time it will take to gather them.....”

Ark sighed and muttered. Tori noticed Ark's expression and opened his

mouth.

“The truth is.....”

“What? What’s with this reaction? Don’t tell me you don’t think you can repair it?”

“T-that’s not it.” Just.....”

“Just?”

“The ones that Hyung-nim took care of aren’t the only Nakuma to attack the ship. There were a few more big ones. They ate the airship first. The other guys flocked only after they finished. The Nakuma that Hyung-nim defeated only ate some of it. The big ones ate the main systems and important engines. Even the emergency repair kit.....”

“What? T-then?”

“If you don’t regain all of that then repairing.....”

Ttiring.

<Lost Parts (Selection Quest)>

You’ve crash landed in an unknown area on the planet Amara.

But this isn’t a safe place.

The Nakuma attacked and stripped away a few key parts of the airship. Now you have two choices. Take a risk to chase the Nakuma and retrieve the parts or

give up on the airship.

* Target: Parts Recovery 0/100%

Difficulty: B

A quest was registered. It was a Selection Quest but Ark had no choice. Right now he didn't know where he was. If he gave up on the airship then he would have to walk in an unknown direction to try and find a city.

"Dammit!"

"Hik! I-I'm sorry! I....I....."

Tori screamed as Ark glared at him. Tori wrapped both arms around his head and asked in a troubled voice.

"W-what are you going to do?"

"Do you have to ask? Can you repair the airship in this situation? Then don't I have to chase after them and bring back the parts?"

"W-what will I do when Hyung-nim is gone?"

"What else? You stay here with the airship....."

Ark then thought of something and bit his lips. It wasn't safe to leave the hamster with the airship like it was already demonstrated. Tori would most likely die if the Nakuma came back. If I leave the airship then it is like throwing a chunk of meat at the hyenas. Parts might disappear without a trace when he came back.

'It can't be helped.'

Ark sighed and pulled out a shovel.

“Now, take this.”

“Shovel? Why are you giving this to me.....heok! N-no way! Digging my own grave.....Hyung-nim, save me! I don’t want to die here! I’m willing to lick your shoes! Anything! As long as I don’t die.....”

“What are you imagining? Am I part of the mafia? Or abnormal? Why would I want you to lick my shoes? Who is forcing you to dig a grave?”

“Eh? It isn’t like that?”

“In this situation I can’t leave the airship alone while looking for the parts. However I can’t bring it with me. So what are the other methods? The only way is to hide it.”

“Hide it? Burying the airship in the ground.....”

“You don’t want to? Then do you want to dig a grave?”

“Ah, no it’s fine!”

Tori started shovelling like crazy. This was the best way Ark could think of at the moment. Of course it wasn’t as easy as it sounded. Even a small airship was 3 times the size of a bus. It would take a considerable amount of time to dig the ground enough to hide the airship. Luckily Ark knew that the Nakuma didn’t leave a certain area. In other words, the Nakuma who ate the main parts couldn’t have escaped far! So he could afford to hide the airship even if it took some time. Also, Ark first learnt the Dig skill when creating the tunnel to rob the museum. But Ark wasn’t the one who originally created the tunnel. Half of the tunnel had already been completed by the time Ark saw it. That tunnel was created by Tori! Tori was a hamster who specialized in digging.

“Tell me if you think it is tough. Then I will make a place for your grave.”

“Pant pant pant! No! It isn’t hard at all!”

The hamster really wanted to live.

Pa pa pa pa! Pa pa pa pa! Pa pa pa pa!

As expected, Tori started digging at a tremendous pace when a threat was added. Seeing Tori like that brought up memories of Nephalim. He had dug a tunnel for one week without seeing any sunlight. At that time, Tori had just thrown the shovel at Ark and watched him dig.

‘Yes, this is good.’

Ark nodded with a look of deep emotion.

‘I don’t have many fond memories of this guy. Therefore this is great. From now on I will pay back those memories!’

Ark wanted to record his grudge on Tori’s bones!

“Hey, are you slowing down? Do you want to stop?”

“Pant pant pant! No! I’ll work hard! So put that shotgun down! Sob, scary!”

Tori shouted as he desperately swung his shovel. Thanks to Tori’s tearful efforts, a pit large enough to cover the airship was created after 10 hours. Ark pushed the airship in and covered it with iron mold.

“That’s it. Now it is time to collect the parts.”

Ark turned around after covering the airship. It wasn’t hard to chase after the Nakuma. Unlike the swamp area of Nephalim, this place was made of iron mold. And the Nakuma were basically made of iron. Therefore their trail on the ground remained intact. He followed the trail for 10 minutes.

“There is a dungeon in a place like this.”

He managed to find a gap in between the hills. The walls and ceiling of the cave was covered in iron mold! An information window flashed once he

stepped foot inside.

-The hidden dungeon <Abyss of Despair> has been discovered.

+ Dungeon information: Abyss of Despair +

Many planets in the galaxy are filled with beautiful sights. But there are many hidden areas on those beautiful planets. Some planets that look gorgeous are filled with toxic gases while some contain fearsome monsters.

You have found a dungeon made of iron mold on the planet called Amara. No signs of life can be detected. However you can see signs of non-biological creatures. These signs seem to warn you of danger. But there is no reward without risk. In order to grow, a pioneer needs the courage and skill to face this danger.

* Adventure Points +600

Space 4: Abyss of Despair

SPACE 4. Abyss of Despair

Snap! Chwajijijijik!

His lightsaber hit the joints of the machine! Sparks flew as the lightsaber collided with it and the machine parts fell off. It was the scene of the Nakuma losing all its health and being turned into a pile of junk. But he had no time to catch his breath. Ark dealt with 1 Nakuma and turned his body without any delay. He saw a pair of red lights approaching and withdrew a bit. The light was made by a machine but he could feel hostility from it.

“Pant pant, there really is a variety.”

Ark breathed harshly as he lifted his lightsaber. He followed the Nakuma’s trail to this dungeon so naturally it was infested with Nakuma. However the Nakuma weren’t the same. The Nakuma created their forms based on the machine parts attached to them. While some had gears attached to their arms, others looked like a caterpillar or had wheels attached to their legs. The most demanding form was now surrounding Ark. They were the Nakuma in the form of a dog. These guys were exceptionally tricky because.....

Kuwaaaah!

The Dog Nakuma shrieked and ran up to him. It jumped 10 metres in a single bound!

Papat!

The Dog Nakuma had incredible speed.

“Not a chance!”

Ark stepped back and pulled the trigger. However the opponent had already twisted in the air before the bullet shot out of the Fire Eagle. He was then simultaneously attacked by the other Dog Nakuma.

Kuaaaa!

Secondly, they were very organized.

“Dammit! Again.....”

Ark hastily used his sword to block the Dog Nakuma. The sword was pushed against the mouth of a mechanical creature that reached 2 metres and blood welled out as its fangs bit him.

Kakak! Ka ka ka ka!

Sparks flew as the lightsaber clashed against the Dog Nakuma’s mouth. They didn’t just have metal fangs. They had dozen of small rotating saws in its mouth. It might be a lightsaber but the saws cut the electromagnetic surface of the blade.

-The durability of Heir’s Sword has fallen!

Naturally the lightsaber couldn’t avoid getting damaged. But right now he only had 30% health left so that came first. The one who avoided his shotgun ran up the moment Ark’s movement was blocked. And it tried to bite Ark’s leg!

“Psychokinesis!”

Ark turned and shouted.

A small pile of machine parts flew up and aimed directly at the head of the Dog Nakuma about to bite his leg.

Kong!

It screamed (?) and stumbled. Ark twisted his body and placed the muzzle of the Fire Eagle to its jaw.

“Set Bullets Shooting!”

Cheolkeok, cheolkeok, cheolkeok! Pepepeng!

Half of its head flew away. Ark also vertically cut the Nakuma’s body with his lightsaber. Oil and minor accessories poured out as the lightsaber cut it.

“Pant pant pant, pant pant pant.”

Ark panted as he was soaked in oil. The other Dog Nakuma flinched and ran away. But Ark had no intention of just letting them escape.

“Khafra Fencing 3rd style! Galaxy Sword!”

Dozens of blue swords shredded the darkness! Cracks spread on the surface and the Dog Nakuma collapsed. Ark narrowed the distance and placed the muzzle of his gun on the head of a monster that was gasping.

Pepeng! Pepeng! Pepeng!

There was a final roar as the Dog Nakuma changed to a mountain of metal.

“Phew, it’s over.”

His body sagged as the tension was released. The desperate struggle against 13 Dog Nakuma finally ended after 20 minutes.

“Wow! Hyung-nim, awesome!”

A cheer came from the corner. He turned around and saw a hamster crawling out from a gap in the iron mold. He ran in front of Ark and twisted his hands together.

“You’ve become so much stronger that you don’t seem like the same person. The difference from the novice I first saw you in Nephalim is huge.”

“Are you calling me a novice?”

“Ah no, that’s not what I mean. You were just a beginner pioneer when you first entered Istana. Back then Hyung-nim had some force. I could tell with one glance. Didn’t I scout Hyung-nim?”

“It was a fraudulent contract to be precise.”

“No, what fraud.....?”

“Be careful what you say. Eh? You don’t want to remind me of the old days.”

When Ark glared at him, Tori’s eyes instantly said ‘Sheesh, it was a compliment.’

‘I need to teach him clearly once I catch him.’

His attitude showed signs of creeping up again. However now wasn’t the right time. Ark was currently in a Nakuma infested dungeon. He couldn’t afford to hit the hamster in a place like this. That hamster was also indispensable to Ark right now.

‘I took him along because I couldn’t leave him alone but he surprisingly has a lot of uses.’

Bbok bbok bbok bbok! Bbok bbok bbok bbok!

Ark placed the Charenjok on his head and sat down while looking at Tori. When Ark first entered the dungeon he thought of Tori as excess baggage. He wasn’t helpful in combat and needed to be protected so that he could repair the airship. But that idea soon changed. There were several types of engineers. Creating buildings, producing accessories, developing new technology like Jay and those who could handle special machines were classified as engineers. The one common point was that they didn’t have any combat ability. The only exception were those who handled explosives like Mellin. That’s why Ark thought all engineers except explosive experts were useless in dungeons. Ark’s idea was true to a certain extent. However that changed in remote planets of the galaxy.

‘I didn’t think the dungeon would be this wide.’

Ark surveyed the grey walls of the dungeon. He originally thought he could explore it in a few hours tops. However the dungeon was wider and more complicated than he imagined. It was still difficult to grasp the size even though he had spent 2 days in the dungeon. And the dungeon was brimming with Nakuma. Therefore some problems occurred.

-The durability of Harkenion Armour has fallen to 10%!

-The durability of the Pioneer’s Pants has fallen to 10%.....

The durability of his equipment! He had repaired his equipment before heading to Amara but now it was at the bottom. Cheksun’s toolbox could repair general equipment but it didn’t work for most magic items. It was also impossible for him to go back to the city.

“I’ll be happy to look at it!”

At this time it was Tori who raised his hand. Tori was a hamster who originally operated a junkyard!

-From ships to small screws! All orders custom made!

Those were the words on Tori’s sign. In other words, Tori was a manufacturing and repair engineer. Tori had the skill to repair or create parts for ships and equipment if the order was received. Tori started to exert his skills once the repair kit was recovered from one of the defeated Nakuma.

“Do you have enough bullets?”

“They’re not abundant.”

Usually he didn’t have to worry about ammunition falling when fighting against enemies. That’s because he could get bullets from the loot. However Ark’s firearm was a shotgun. The Nakuma only dropped bullets for Gatling guns or shells for RPGs.

“Then tell me when you need some. I will make it.”

“Eh? You can create bullets?”

“Hihihihi. I have the 2nd class license to create projectiles. I can create bullets for shotguns with the repair kit as long as I have the metal.”

That’s why Ark could fire the shotgun wildly. Of course repairing equipment and bullet production wasn’t free. It didn’t cost money but materials were required to repair and manufacture the bullets. But this was a dungeon full of Nakuma. Various metals dropped with every kill so he had a large number of materials. That wasn’t all.

Ark came into the dungeon to recover the airship parts from the Nakuma. But a lot of parts were bulky and couldn’t be properly stored in his bag. These parts also needed to be relocated to the airship. That problem was also resolved by Tori!

“Please wait a moment!”

Tori fiddled with a piece of metal for a while. He soon created a large wagon. Therefore Ark’s bag capacity increased by several times and he could just concentrate on hunting the Nakuma. This was the true value of engineers! They were all-rounders as long as they had the necessary tools and materials. All his problems were resolved by having an engineer. The downside was that they had no combat ability but that wasn’t an obstacle with Tori. Ark didn’t need to worry about Tori. Tori was a hamster, a rat. He specialized in finding safe places to hide. Ark become bloody every time he fought the Nakuma so fury rose up whenever he saw Tori with not one scratch on him. But he would rather be shot then have Tori die.

“Hihihi, how is it? Aren’t I a lot of help?”

‘If only he didn’t make any noise.....’

However he understood Tori’s position.

If Ark gave up on the airship then any reason to keep Tori was lost. With their bad relationship in the past, Ark would probably abandon or even let him die if that happened. Therefore Tori kept on trying to show that he was a useful hamster. But Ark had no intention of throwing away Tori.

‘I didn’t think an engineer with manufacturing skills could be so helpful on the hunting ground. Engineers are worth more than troops in non-urban areas. I can’t easily give him up. I have to somehow make him join Dark Eden!’

Tori couldn’t understand what was going on. Anyway!

Tori had his share of tasks despite not being able to fight.

“Pant pant pant, this is difficult! But I’ll work hard. I’m a good hamster.”

Tori ran around collection loot, loading it onto the wagon, repairing Ark’s equipment and making bullets while Ark was recovering his health.

Character Information Window			
Name	Ark (R-02788)	Level	99
Species	Human	Occupation	Elim’s Heir

Fame	8,520	Adventure	1,720
Health	2,600 (+90)	Mental Power	50 (+340)
Mana	0	Force	260
Strength	250 (+38)	Agility	315 (+41)
Stamina	405 (+18)	Wisdom	40 (+13)
Intelligence	240 (+68)	Luck	55 (+8)
* Title			
Cleaning Foreman (Agility + 3)			
Ignorant Destroyer (Wisdom -10, Strength +7, Stamina +7)			
Beltana's Hero (Strength, Agility, Stamina, Wisdom, Intelligence, Luck +3) Athamas' Hero (Strength, Agility, Stamina, Wisdom, Intelligence, Luck +5)			
Mediator (Wisdom, Intelligence +15)			
* Contribution: Galactic Federation 11,850, Aschulat 500			
* Affiliation: Dark Eden (CEO)			
*Body Coating: Survivor			
+ Environmental adaptation increases by 50% due			

to the Survivor coating.

+ The Survivor coating reduces the drop rate of Satiety by 30%.

+ The Survivor coating will reduce fall damage by 50%.

+The 'Clairvoyance' effect of the Survivor coating is applied.

The Abyss of Despair was a fairly decent hunting ground. His level went up at a tremendous speed while hunting the Nakuma. The repairing and supplies inside the dungeon meant he didn't need to waste time. He had gained 4 levels after spending 2 days in the dungeon! There was also a bonus of expensive metal parts in the wagon. Quite a few items were mixed in as well.

Continuous Shooting Gatling

Item Type: Gun Wearer Restriction: Level 75

Attack: 15~20 Firing Rate: 0.10Sec

Durability: 28/40 Number of Ammunition: 300

A gun with 6 barrels to prevent overheating, the continuous shooting increases the power of the gun dramatically. But compared to the destructive power of the bullets, the heavy recoil means that the hit rate has decreased. Nevertheless, it is a charming weapon that pours out bullets and has been a favourite for a long time.

<Hit rate -30%>

-Hamid's Ritual Scapula

Item Type: Light Armour (Shoulder) Wearer

Restriction: Level 50

Defense: 20 (-5) Durability: 31/45

The scapula belonging to an alien species called Hamid. The main part of the scapula is made of a rare metal alloy that is difficult to find these days. Perhaps the Hamid soldiers used equipment made of this material a long time ago.

Etc.....

'If I just look at the experience and loot, it isn't better than Mt. Fargo. But there is no other user or NPC to gobble it up! It isn't easy to find a hunting ground like this on Istana.'

However there wasn't only benefits. Even if he raised his level to 100, it would all be lost if he died without registering with the Fairy. The expensive metal pieces weren't stored in his bag so they would also be lost. And even if Ark survived, Tori who was hiding would die as well. He had just learnt the value of his henchman so Ark didn't want to lose him. Therefore the most important thing was for Ark to live! He had to return to Istana alive.

However.....

"Hyung-nim, I've searched through all of it!"

"So? Did you find the airship parts?"

“There is nothing this time as well.”

“Again?”

Ark said with a sigh. In fact, Ark hadn't expected to spend 2 days in the dungeon when he first came here. The recovery of airship parts in the beginning of the dungeon was quite high. He obtained a minimum of 1 piece when he fought 3~4 Nakuma. Thanks to that, Ark's current recovery rate was 90%. However that all dried up a few hours ago.

“If it was the outside armour or simple circuit then I could easily repair it.....”

The remaining 10% he hadn't found contained the most important part of the airship, the engine.

“Where the hell is the guy who pulled out the engine?”

“I don't know either. I was lying face down on the ground so I couldn't see it. But it was fairly big. The ground shook as the Nakuma stomped on it. The other Nakuma also seemed to back off from it.”

“That is probably the boss Nakuma.”

It was common sense for the monster to be a boss. That meant Ark was forced to go to the end of the dungeon. It wasn't a big deal. He entered the dungeon to find parts but he didn't have a problem going around a hidden dungeon. Ark had a separate issue.

“This.....”

Ark sighed and mumbled. There were 10 piles of metal around him. Most of them were junk metal that Ark recognized at a glance with metallurgy. There were also some expensive mechanical parts were mixed in among them! But that wasn't why Ark was upset.

-There is no more space in your bag!

Ark had steadily filled his bag with loot from the Nakuma and now his bag was full! Tori no longer had any room in his wagon. Ark had reached the situation where he couldn't eat anymore some time ago. He became stressed every time he had to leave the mechanical parts in a pile. It wasn't only collecting the

mechanical parts that he was worried about.

“It’s been 2 days so I’m worried about what might happen.”

Leaving mechanical parts was like asking for the Nakuma to gather. Ark left behind many mechanical parts for the Nakuma to eat. This meant it would take him some time when exiting. However he was most worried about looking for the airship parts.

“Only a bit more to go.”

The Abyss of Despair had a complex structure. But he had spent 2 days slowly going through it. His intuition developed. He felt like the long dungeon was going to end soon!

“Okay. Let’s go!”

Ark stood up and walked down a long cave.

“Hyung-nim, don’t leave me alone!”

Tol tol tol tol, tol tol tol tol.

Tori dragged the wagon and followed behind Ark.

“What, what the? This place is?”

Ark looked around with shocked eyes. He witnessed an amazing sight a few hours after resuming the dungeon exploration. In fact, Ark had one disconcerting question while wandering the Abyss of Despair. In those 2 days Ark had defeated approximately 1,000 Nakuma. Those guys dropped metal weighing the equivalent of tens of thousands of tons! This was the question.

‘Where did all those metal parts come from?’

The answer was now in front of Ark. A huge cave was situated in front of him. Surprisingly dozens of airships were in the underground space and covered with iron mold like cobwebs.

‘This is it! This is why the area is covered with so much iron mold. And the Nakuma must be made with the remnants of the airships! This is the source of the dungeon!’

The secret behind the dungeon was revealed.

“But why are so many wrecked airships gathered here?”

“I don’t care about that.”

Ark cut off Tori.

“The important thing is that this is the start of the dungeon. In other words, this is the end of the dungeon. The boss Nakuma who took the engine should be hiding somewhere here.”

Tori breathed deeply and looked around fearfully at Ark’s words.

“Is it really okay? It sounded really huge.....”

“Is it okay? Do you think I will die?”

“That’s not it.....”

“Don’t waste time thinking about that and stay focused. We don’t know where that guy will pop up. You don’t want to end up like the airships.”

Ark said as he readied his lightsaber. A drop of sweat flowed down in the silence. The light from the lightsaber revealed a shadow at the back of the web of iron mold. A mysterious atmosphere was created among the wreckage of the airships. He carefully walked over there.

“What is that?”

Ark’s eyes narrowed like a hawk. He began to see the form of something large. The streamlined shape was an airship. However it was different from the airships around it. The bone structure of the airships were similar. However the hull of this one was 3 times larger. The length was 100 meters. But the biggest difference was.....

“Why is it the only one intact?”

Unlike the other airships, this one looked untouched. The Nakuma’s largest desire was metal. Ark’s airship was 200 metres from the dungeon and they still found it. Yet this airship inside the dungeon was in perfectly good shape.

“Is the airship made of a metal that the Nakuma hate?”

“Let’s see, the materials don’t seem particularly different.....I’ll take a closer

look.”

Ark walked around the airship. Up close it wasn't in a perfect condition. The hull seemed to show traces of a battle. But he could find no signs that the Nakuma had attacked it. Meanwhile Tori who was examining the hull said.

“That's strange. This airship is made of the Cherenium steel alloy.

“Why is that strange?”

“Cherenium's durability is strong but it is different to mold so it isn't often used these days. Most airships these days are made of a Teban alloy that has similar durability but is more easily handled. In other words, the airship was created prior to the development of the Teban alloy. And the Nakuma certainly don't dislike Cherenium. So why is this airship untouched by the Nakuma?”

“I don't know either.....”

Ark thought for a moment before quickly asking.

“The airship, can we use it?”

“Airship?”

“Look. It is apparently fine. Well, it must have some problems if it is stuck in a place like this but isn't it better than our airship that has been turned into scrap metal?”

This airship instantly looked better than the one Ark came on. Besides, it was an ownerless airship. If he repaired it then he could get this airship for free. However Tori shook his head like there was no chance.

“That's impossible.”

“What? Why?”

“Check for yourself.”

Tori pointed to the door on the side of the hull. The door handle was just a circular groove. Perhaps this was where the key would be inserted. But he needed a key to enter. Ark connected his Nympe to the door.

-This device is protected by a security device.

<Enter the security code or use Invaders to hack and release the lock. This lock has a security rating of level 99. Your hacking skill is currently only Lv. 2 and you can only release level 4~6 locks.

<If you don't know the password then try again after raising the level of your hacking skill>

“Do you see?”

It was like Tori said.

“This isn't a regular airship. Battleships have locking devices made with special security equipment so it is on an entirely different scale compared to ordinary airships. The key probably contains the use of the captain's DNA. It is impossible to decrypt these type of keys without a super computer.”

“Sheesh, there's nothing we can do?”

Blowing up the door to enter the airship was meaningless. He couldn't enter without a key. He attempted to use his hacking skill to steal the airship but that was useless.

‘If I can get this airship to work then it would be a jackpot.....’

Ark looked at the airship with an upset expression.

Kukung!

There was a sudden roaring sound from behind him.

“Hik! W-what the? What's going on? Where's the sound coming from?”

The freaked out Tori looked around with a stricken expression. Tori's gaze drifted upwards and his mouth gaped open. He pointed to the rear of the airship with trembling hands and stuttered.

“Hik! T-that.....that is.....Hyung-nim.....that.....”

Tori's finger was pointing towards a huge object. It had large and small machine parts attached to it.....a Nakuma. But this Nakuma was a lot different from the ones he had seen so far. The humanoid Nakuma was a whopping 20 metre! It gave an overpowering impression! Ark winced and retreated.

"O-oh my god! This is the Nakuma that ate the engine?"

"No! It wasn't this big!"

"No? What, then he is?"

The red eyes of the Nakuma then faced Ark.

—An intruder.....destroy!

The Nakuma's size was 20 metres. He couldn't find a way to deal with it. But Ark was an experienced warrior. This wasn't enough to make him lose his fighting spirit. Ark raised his lightsaber and shouted.

"I can't avoid fighting it! Tori, back off!"

"Don't worry about me!"

He had Tori reply from a distance. He looked around and saw that Tori was dozens of metres away from the airships. He poked out his head and shook his fist as he shouted.

"Hyung-nim, I'll cheer you on from here! Fighting!"

.....His fighting spirit disappeared. Then a black object appeared over his head. The Nakuma!

—Get lost!

Kwakwang!

The huge foot dropped down and the entire cave shook. If he was caught then it would be GAME OVER.....

Ark avoided it and wielded his lightsaber.

"Khafra Fencing 3rd style! Galaxy Sword!"

Dozens of swords swirled through the darkness. Sparks flew up from the Nakuma's leg. But the Nakuma was fine. The Nakuma had a shield and even

Ark's strongest skill couldn't penetrate it. It had enormous defense!

However Ark still didn't lose his fighting spirit.

"Let's see if you can hold up against this!"

Ark wielded his sword as he rushed towards the Nakuma. No, he was about to rush at the Nakuma. At that moment, dozens of RPGs and guns welled up from the Nakuma's arms.

"What? T-that.....?"

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu! Pepepepeng!

Ark screamed and stopped moving as there was the sound of guns. Dozens of bullets and shells flew towards him! Ark rotated his body like a spin top while swinging his sword. The blue light of his sword spread out! The bullets parted on either side of him. It was his skill Sword Defense that reached intermediate level in the Abyss of Despair!

-The rating of the skill 'Sword Defense (Common Occupation ☆☆)' has risen!

Sword Defense (Intermediate, Passive): You have gained experience in numerous battlefields and became more skills in Sword Defense. You can penetrate the enemy's attack with your sharp intuition. This allows you a deeper understanding of the nature of the lightsaber. Now crude use of firearms won't be able to hurt your body.

<The scope of Sword Defense has become wider>

* Sword Mastery Lv.3 or higher required.

That was written in the information window. The intermediate skill

proficiency and broadened scope meant he could defend against 90% of the Nakuma's bullets. But the timing needed to be accurate. Hundreds of bullets were flying towards Ark! He couldn't change the trajectory of all of them. He never intended to block all the bullets in the first place! Intermediate Sword Defense could protect his vital points. The other bullets penetrated his body and blood went everywhere. However the RPG shells were the more serious problem. Unlike the bullets, the shells did splash damage. He wouldn't be able to stop that with Sword Defense!

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

Successive explosions occurred in the vicinity of his body. His health went down at a tremendous rate thanks to the flash damage. But Ark couldn't afford to groan. No, he didn't even have time to blink. Another hail of bullets was raining down from 20 metres above him. His body would become riddled in 0.1 second. He barely managed to hold on by increasing his concentration.

'This won't last for long. In this state I won't be able to hold out for 1 minute. Then.....'

Ark grasped his sword hilt and grinded his teeth together.

'.....I have no choice but to try it!'

"Mind Shield!"

-The Mind Shield has been activated.

<A shield with 370 durability has been generated around the body. The shield will reduce all damage by 40~60% until the durability falls to 0.

In addition, the effect of Backstab or Sudden Blow will be nullified by 100%>

His body was wrapped in a blue sphere. Ark raised his sword as the shield

covered him. He stopped moving and waited for the bullets. A few shots hit his neck and chest, causing his health to go down quickly. However Ark didn't even shake.

'Pay attention! Pay attention! Pay attention! Pay attention!'

Ark bit his lip and stared at the hundreds of bullets! Then he saw the shells blended in with the bullets! His lightsaber flew up as the shells got closer.

"Sword Defense!"

The lightsaber swept down and changed the orbit of the shells. But he didn't just change the trajectory of the shells. Ark rotated his lightsaber with all his force while striking the shells. He circulated the trajectory of the shell and it flew back in the direction it came from. Towards the Nakuma!

Sword Defense was now an intermediate level so it wasn't that hard to change the direction. But changing the orbit to return it wasn't that simple. The orbit was changed many times in a short period. It required enormous concentration and sword skills. This was the reason Ark increased his concentration. His target was the Nakuma's legs!

Pepepepeng!

The shells hit the Nakuma and it stumbled. The shower of bullets aimed at Ark was pushed to the side. Ark's eyes brightened and he shouted.

"Now! Super Board!"

Ark took out the air board and rushed to the Nakuma. A long blue light crossed the space.

"Now it is starting!"

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu! Pepeng!

The Nakuma recovered as the bullets once again aimed at the centre. Ark used Sword Defense while rushing at full speed and used the air board as a springboard to shove his sword into the Nakuma's legs.

Snap! Chwajijijijik!

Sparks flew as the sword got stuck in between machine parts.

“.....That’s it!”

Ark exclaimed as he struck. Then his body started ascending at an absurd speed. The Nakuma was shaking his leg.

–Get off!

Kwa kwa kwa kwang, kwa kwa kwa kwang!

He fell down as the whole area shook. Ark shoved his sword into his bag and hung onto the leg with both arms. But the Nakuma wasn’t made with one piece of smooth metal and he became injured from sharp parts sticking out.

-Your skin has been torn by rusty iron.

<Your stamina has fallen by 10 thanks to tetanus.
You will receive 2 damage every 10 seconds for 10
minutes>

To make matters worse, he also got tetanus! However.....bbok!

“This is useful in times like this.”

Ark had attached the Charenjok’s token on his head. It was the Charenjok’s Token that healed 2 health every 4 seconds. It was a very useful item even if he only had 1 health left. However the value wasn’t in its recovery effect. The most troublesome thing about abnormal status was the penalty to his ability. But if he used the Charenjok’s token then he could become invincible to abnormal statues for 10 minutes. Of course he had no intention of getting into that state again.

“Armour armament!”

Ark immediately pulled out his battle suit. He grabbed the machine parts with his left hand and held the lightsaber in the other before climbing the leg.

–You insect! You’re still attached? Get off!

The Nakuma’s hand fell towards Ark. It didn’t dare shoot bullets or RPGs.

That's because Ark was hanging from its body!

'This guy's firepower is at the standard of dozens of troopers. If it starts shooting then it will be damaged. This is one way to seal off its guns! Use its body!'

Ark was no different from a bug to that Nakuma. It couldn't shoot its own body just to get rid of a bug. But that wasn't all.

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

Metal parts fell off as it shook its leg. However the scale of the movement was different.

'The movement is slow!'

Ark rushed to the back of the legs. He used his lightsaber again to climb its body. The Nakuma's body was being struck by the lightsaber. Ark could decrease its health just by climbing the body. There was even more. Every time the Nakuma would shake its legs or waist to get rid of Ark and metal parts would fall. Of course, the damage wasn't that large compared to the Nakuma's overall health. Ark didn't expect to take care of the Nakuma like this.

Kwa kwang! Kwa kwa kwa kwa! Kwa kwa kwa kwa!

Ark continued climbing the Nakuma. The Nakuma tried to slap its body but Ark moved around like a cockroach. The fierce battle continued for 10 minutes!

"There it is!"

Ark was finally able to stand on the Nakuma's shoulders.

—You!

The Nakuma's head turned towards Ark. Ark could see hundreds of mechanical components that formed the face. Ark's face was covered with a few minor wounds but he was smiling.

"Watch carefully. You will never see this face again!"

Ark shouted as he ran along the shoulders towards the Nakuma's head. The lightsaber was driven into the Nakuma's eye. Ark then placed the muzzle of the Fire Eagle against the other eyeball and pulled the trigger.

“Set Bullets Shooting!”

Cheolkeok, cheolkeok, cheolkeok! Pepepeng!

The red light disappeared from both sides. This meant that the Nakuma had lost both of its eyes.

-Kuaaaah! Y-you!

The Nakuma screamed angrily.

“It will be troublesome if you die too early. I’m only just starting.”

Ark grinned as he held on tightly to the Nakuma’s shaky body. And.....a full scale attack was launched. The lightsaber and Fire Eagle continuously attacked. The attacks were poured on the Nakuma’s head.

Pepeng! Pepeng! Pepeng!

-Headshot!

<You have inflicted a serious blow and the enemy will receive additional 150% damage>

It was a headshot! The Nakuma’s health started going down quickly. Of course the Nakuma wasn’t just politely being attacked. Both arms swung like crazy as it tried to hit Ark. However the Nakuma’s sensors was its eyes and they were destroyed. And Ark wasn’t a slow user that could be hit by fists recklessly swung.

Kwa kwa kwa kwang! Pal pal pal pal!

He avoided the flying hands and struck with his lightsaber.

Kwa kwa kwa kwang! Pal pal pal pal!

He avoided the flying hands and pulled the trigger of the Fire Eagle. Ark jumped around the shoulders and persistently only attacked the head. The Nakuma’s health dropped enormously from Ark continuing to hi its head. The

machine parts fell off each time until the Nakuma only had 10% health left. At that moment the Nakuma's movement stopped. Then it kneeled down like a doll with its throat cut.

“Eh? What the? Its giving up even with health remaining.....”

Ark tilted his head with confusion.

Syu syu syu syu! Syu syu syu syu!

Then dozens of metal wires rose from the Nakuma's neck and wound around Ark. At the same time, the Nakuma stood up and swung its fists.

“T-this!”

Panic spread on Ark's face. But Ark couldn't afford to think. He had 50% health left after the start of the battle and climbing the Nakuma decreased it to 30%. He attacked one-sidedly from the shoulder but that didn't mean he didn't receive any damage. Considering the Nakuma's offense, he would die if hit by the hand! But now his movements were sealed. He couldn't avoid the Nakuma's punch! Ark judged the situation and clenched his fist.

“Yes, let's see who is stronger in fists! 18 Barrage!”

Steam gushed out from the battle suit and his fists poured out.

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

The Nakuma or Ark's fists! Their two fists conflicted. Ark's 18 Barrage couldn't stop the fist of someone larger than him. Ark was pushed back the moment he felt their real weight.

Kwakwang!

The roaring sound resounded through the dark space again.

Space 5: Silver Star

SPACE 5. Silver Star

“Ugh!”

A scream burst out from some rubble dozens of metres away from the airship.

“He’s dead! Dead! What do I do now? Dammit! You bastard! What will I do if you die in a place like this? That’s why I was subservient to you! It was for the opportunity to escape after we left Amara! What will happen if you die here? You screwed up! Dammit! I didn’t follow you here just to end up like this!”

Tori pulled his hair and screamed.

“Khafra Fencing 3rd style! Galaxy Sword!”

Then blue light came from the body of the Nakuma. The light continuously cut the Nakuma’s body and the one wielding it was Ark. Then he rolled to the ground.

Ku ku ku ku! Ku ku ku ku! Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

The underground space started rumbling. The Nakuma was taken apart and fell to pieces. Tori watched this scene with wide eyes.

“Y-you....no, Hyung-nim! How.....that guy’s fist clearly hit you.....?”

“My fist is mightier than its finger.”

The dirt covered Ark laughed. Just before the Nakuma had hit him, Ark battered its finger with 18 Barrage. Ark only aimed for the Nakuma’s finger. Even if the Nakuma had high health, its durability had no choice but to fall when hitting that one part. When he focused the firepower of 18 Barrage, the finger instantly separated into parts. An empty space was left behind. Ark was able to

survive by using that space. Ark plunged inside the Nakuma and hacked away at its wires with his lightsaber! Then he used Galaxy Sword to vertically penetrate the stomach.

-Your level has risen!

-Your level has risen.....

The Nakuma turned into a pile of metal and he gained 5 levels.

“Ohhh! Hyung-nim! You’re too awesome! I knew Hyung-nim could do it!”

“I heard everything.”

Ark looked at Tori with a disbelieving expression.

“You were looking for an opportunity to escape once we left Amara?”

“No, t-that’s not.....”

Tori stuttered as he broke into a cold sweat. But Ark had no interest in doing anything. He had no expectations that Tori was sincerely following him. Ark knew he had other plans. It wouldn’t work of course. He had no intention of letting Tori get away with it but now he had verified his plans.

‘I saw it while going through the Nakuma’s body.....’

Ark approached the pile of metal that was the wreckage of the Nakuma. After digging through the centre of the pile, he managed to find what he was looking for among some machine parts. The material felt like the shell of an insect!

‘There’s no doubt about it. This is the Rama’s battle suit!’

This was wat Ark saw when going through the Nakuma’s body. A man covered

in the Rama's battle suit was intertwined with the machine parts inside the Nakuma.

'Don't tell me he's still alive?'

Ark's hand touched the battle suit. The battle suit was engulfed in a blue light and turned into an octagonal object.

-You have obtained the core of a new battle suit!

<The Rama's battle suit is formed with the core of an ancient magic life form called the Drone.

Therefore the Rama's battle suit can gain experience through combat like a user. But the Drone has no ability to grow on its own so it needs to absorb other Drones to turn that experience into power.

Accumulated experience and a Drone's core. These two are necessary conditions to evolve the battle suit> * Necessary experienced needed for evolution:
86,000/50,000

-You have met the required conditions to evolve your current battle suit.

Would you like to evolve the battle suit? (Y/N)

“This is great!”

This answered all his questions. The information window regarding the Hyper Drone had a level attached to it. That level attached meant that it could grow. And he could see that experience was accumulated every time he used the battle suit. However the level didn't increase no matter how much experience he gained. This was the reason why! A new core was necessary for his battle suit to grow. It didn't state the conditions necessary to level it up so he never thought about it. There was no reason for him to think about it.

“Evolve!”

-The battle suit has evolved!

Hyper Drone Lv.1 → Hyper Drone Lv.2

- * Mana regeneration of the Hyper Drone has increased by 10%!
- * The ability of Hyper Drone to strengthen the body will increase by 5% to 35%!
- * The damage of Hyper Drone's battle technique 18 Barrage has increased by 10%!
- * Hyper Drone has absorbed the memory of the new core and learnt a new skill!

-Hyper Drone Exclusive Skill-

Hyper Booster (User, Active): The battle suit has absorbed the core of a new Drone. The Hyper Drone has accepted that power and acquired the new ability Hyper Booster. Using this technique, you can move up to 100 metres at a top speed of 200 km/hr. It will consume the mana of the battle suit.

Mana consumption: 5%

His battle suit evolved! The numerical gains was enormous. A mana regeneration buff and the stats of his battle suit increased! The attack of 18 Barrage also increased! His battle suit also gained the skill Hyper Booster! These would be useful in close combat.

“By the way.....”

Ark looked down at the dead body among the machine parts. It was the body that had been wearing the battle suit. However he wasn't a Rama like Ark expected. The mummy like body was something he had seen several times before. He was a Murat.

‘According to the Elim's Memory, the Rama originally served the Murat. The Murat were probably the ones who created the original Drone battle suits and transferred them to the Rama. In the end the Rama used the technology the Murat gave them to destroy the Murat? Ha, this is why Xanax felt betrayed by his own people. But why did the Murat die in a place like this?’

The mummy's hand was holding a circular crystal. It was a circular crystal that the Murat held onto even when he died!

-You have acquired the <Master Key of the Silver Star battleship>.

"Ohu!"

Ark's eyes shone brightly.

Cheolkong! Pushu!

There was a mechanical sound and the door of the airship opened.

"The name of this airship is Silver Star."

Ark muttered as he stared at the streamlined hull. He felt refreshed as soon as he grabbed the circular crystal. There was a circular groove in the door of the airship. Not surprisingly, the crystal that the Murat mummy was clutching was the key to the airship.

'The locking device is functioning properly. Maybe.....'

There were several cabins on both sides of the aisle in the airship. However Ark didn't even glance at them and looked at something across the hallway. It was the cockpit where various panels were attached. When he looked at the cockpit, a circular groove similar to the door lock caught his eye. Ark inserted the crystal in the groove.

Woong woong woong woong.....Woong woong woong woong.....

The hull vibrated and light turned on.

"Ohh, it's moving!"

In Galaxian, airships were generally classified into two types. One was the airship that he escaped the mine from. That one was a general airship capable of flying within the atmosphere. The other ship could sail through the universe. The Silver Star was a ship like that. Needless to say, those airships could cost thousands of gold! Ordinary or poor users could only dream of owning such an airship. Moreover, it was also a battleship! Ark had found a battleship like this. The owner died a long time ago so the first person to find it could obtain it. If it worked properly then it would be a jackpot!

“Tori, check the systems!”

“Yes, Hyung-nim!”

Tori sat in the cockpit and pressed the buttons. Then an information window appeared on the monitor.

“Heok! T-this.....?”

Tori let out a cry of confusion as he stared at the monitor.

“I-I can’t read it! What language is this?”

Tori’s confusion was reasonable. The characters floating on the information window were ‘◎☆▽△.∴.△○.....’ which was more like shapes than letters. But Ark didn’t panic.

The man holding the Silver Star’s master key was the Murat. Naturally the characters on the monitor would also be Murat. And Ark could decode Murat letters. The information window that Ark translated.....

-Ship’s Basic Information: Silver Star

Hull: Medium-3 Classification: Battleship

Firepower: 25,000

Speed: B Turning: A

Shield: C Energy Efficiency: B

* Hull Damage Rate: 30%

Precaution: Damage to some major facilities has been detected. Flying is possible but the risk can't be guaranteed. It is recommended to repair before operating.

* Hull Energy Charge Rate: 20%

Danger: Energy is not secure enough. The ship is now switching to sleep mode. 50% energy is required in order to switch to navigation mode.

“Then flying is impossible right now?”

When thinking about it, it was the inevitable result. If the Silver Star was capable of flying then it wouldn't be in a place like this.

“The hull damage rate isn't that high. The problem is the energy.....”

Ark thought for a moment before looking back at Tori.

“That reminds me, didn't we find some fuel rods from the Nakuma? How

about it? Can we charge the energy of the airship with the fuel rods?"

"Well, I can't answer without checking the parts. But it might be possible if they use the same type of energy. There might be a problem if the fuel rods of the airship we came on is different from the Silver Star."

"Can you or not?"

Tori quickly replied after Ark yelled.

"If the fuel rods use the same type of energy then I can charge it."

"That's it!"

Ark clenched his fists. The probability that he could occupy the Silver Star was increasing.

"Then check the Silver Star's energy type!"

Ark was shouting at Tori when he heard a sound. A crackling noise was coming from an instrument panel.

-I Murat.....belong.....Silver Star 1st mate.....Ensign Enkaru.....

"What? This?"

"Shhh! Be quiet."

Ark cut Tori off and looked at the 3D image. The holograph showed the battle clad Murat who had been holding the crystal.

—We're left on the planet Amara in the Harmadon constellation.....at the end of a fierce battle.....I succeeded in a forced landing..... The hull isn't damaged but several fuel rods have been destroyed and the energy is in flux.....fortunately I sensed ether in Amara.....the captain and crew went to secure the energy.....it has been one month and they haven't returned..... And.....

The Murat called Enkaru coughed before continuing.

–Nakuma have started to gather here..... So far I've managed to block them but those guys are continuing to multiply.....I'm desperately stopping them but my remaining food has started to run out..... It is to the extent that I think the Nakuma contains the soul of the enemy..... However I will stop these guys for the captain and crew..... If the Nakuma contains the grudge of the enemy.....they will continue to spread.....

The recorded video ended there.

“Now I understand.”

Ark nodded and murmured. The reason for the Silver Star being in a place like this. He didn't know what happened but the Silver Star's fuel rods were destroyed in a fight and crashed landed on Amara. While most of the crew went out to search for energy, the Nakuma started forming from the remnants of the wreckage. Enkaru protected the Silver Star and died. He understood up to here. Then.....

“Eh? Isn't it slightly strange?”

Tori tilted his head to one side and asked Ark.

“The person called Enkaru should've died a long time ago. And the Nakuma were aiming for this ship. If Enkaru died a long time ago then why is the spacecraft in perfect condition?”

“I don't understand that either.....”

Ark was reminded of something.

“Enkaru vowed to protect the Silver Star from the Nakuma. And Enkaru stayed in the centre of the Nakuma's body after he died. Enkaru might've used the power of the Murat to keep that vow.”

“Are you saying that Enkaru was the one to stop the Nakuma?”

“His will to be precise.”

“Oh my god.....then he protected his ship even after he died.....ugh, there is a tear for some reason.....”

Tori looked impressed as tears dripped down his face. Ark was also impressed. In films, the captain of the ship was normally the first one to escape when there was a crash. Yet Enkaru protected the ship until the last moment and stopped the Nakuma for hundreds of years. He was a model sailor! But.....

“Dammit!”

Ark cursed.

“Eh? W-what happened? I almost made a mistake.....”

“You still don’t understand?”

“What is it?”

“The reason the Nakuma didn’t attack the Silver Star was because of Enkaru’s will inside the huge Nakuma. But now the Nakuma isn’t there anymore. What does that mean?”

“W-wait a minute! That means.....”

Kukung! Kukung! Kukung!

A slow ringing sound was continuously heard outside the hull. Ark looked out the window and his face warped. Hundreds of pairs of red light shone in the darkness. The red light belonged to a large variety of Nakuma!

“N-Nakuma! Hyung-nim, Nakuma!”

“I see!”

Ark shouted at Tori.

“Now’s not the time to be doing this! I’ll bring you the fuel rods from the

wagon so check if you can make the ship fly!”

“U-understood!”

Tori ran to the engine room. Meanwhile Ark ran out of the Silver Star.

“.....How many is there?”

The number of Nakuma was a lot more than he could see from inside. He could see hundreds of Nakuma and there were many more red lights in the distance. Those guys had emerged once Ark killed the huge Nakuma.

‘It is the end if these guys gather around the Silver Star!’

It would become like the other airships in the area.

‘I can’t let that happen!’

It wasn’t the time to hesitate. Ark placed the wagon inside the Silver Star and looked for the fuel rods. Then he went running to the engine room. No, he was about to start running. Tori ran over from the other side.

“Hyung-nim, it is serious!”

“It’s serious? What? Is the type of energy wrong?”

“No, the energy type is correct. The Silver Star uses a ether type energy like the airship we came on. However the standard of the fuel rods is different so I have to charge the Silver Star’s system. However the particles need to be switched to raise the purity so charging it will take some time.”

“How long would it take?”

“Securing the energy require for a take-off would need at least 30 minutes.....”

“30 minutes?”

Ark looked at the Nakuma gathering around the Silver Star. There were

hundreds of them! Ark couldn't stop all of them by himself for 30 minutes. No, he was still injured from his fight against the huge Nakuma so he wouldn't even hold out for 1 minute.

"Hyung-nim, it is impossible! It is better to get out of here before it is too late. They're aiming at the Silver Star so we might be able to escape!"

"And what next? How will getting out of here help? I haven't even found all the parts of the airship yet."

"T-that...."

"The airship can't be repaired in this state!"

The same was true even if he repaired it. This was a battleship! How could he give up such a good ship when he just obtained it?

'I can't abandon it! I have to do whatever it takes to obtain the Silver Star! I would rather die than abandon it!'

Then something popped into Ark's head.

"Wait? This is a battleship? Then wouldn't it have weapons?"

".....Ah!"

Tori's eyes shone as he thought of something.

"That's right! saw a passage filled with gun turrets a short while ago!"

"You stupid brat, why are you only telling me about this now?"

"No, that...."

"That's it! You will go charge the fuel rods. I'll tell you this ahead of time. I won't give up on the Silver Star even if it means I have to die. The same goes for you as well. If you want to live then hurry! I don't know how long I can stop the Nakuma even if I use the gun turrets. Every second will decrease the odds!"

Ark left Tori in charge of the fuel rods and ran to a gun turret. There was one turret fitted on the left and right wings of the Silver Star. Ark sat in the chair of the turret facing the direction the Nakuma were coming from. The door opened and the turret soared upwards. Murat characters were shown on a small monitor attached to the upper right.

-The turret has completed its preparation work.

* The Silver Star is currently in sleep mode so the automated equipment and energy particle cannon can't be used.

If you want to use the automated equipment then wake it up. If you want to maintain the sleep mode then select manual operation mode.

The energy situation is 0.1%.

“Manual operation!”

Ark shouted as he grabbed the handle of the gun. Meanwhile the Nakuma were 20~30 metres away. The machine emitted a whirring sound and Ark turned the turret towards them. He focused and pulled the trigger!

Kwa kwa kwa kwa! Kwa kwa kwa kwa!

There was a roar in his ear as shells were fired! The strength of the shell ejected from the turret was more than he expected. The Nakuma approaching were instantly crushed. Some lasted for 3~4 hits. The ones that consisted of

small machine parts were demolished in 2~3 hits. It was natural. The Silver Star's gun turret was a basic weapon for large battleships. It was different from the personal guns of the soldiers. The power was comparable to a RPG! The power was enough to melt a train. Of course, his opponents were the Nakuma.

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu! Pepeng!

The Nakuma started to fire back after being hit by shells. In fact, from Ark's position it was a reckless fight. Ark's only purpose was to protect the Silver Star. No matter how powerful the weapon, it couldn't stop all of the Nakuma's bullets. The machine gun also had a longer range while the Silver Star's turrets could only cover 100 metres in front of it. In addition, he couldn't even activate the ship's shield. If hundreds of Nakuma concentrated on the hull then it wouldn't even last 10 minutes, let alone 30 minutes. However.....

Ting! Ting! Ting!

The bullets bounced off something before it hit the Silver Star. The remains of the huge Nakuma was blocking the bullets! The remnants of the huge Nakuma was stacked up in front of the Silver Star like a castle wall. They were placed straight on and at an angle.

'That Nakuma is still protecting the Silver Star even after its death! So cool Enkaru!'

Ark now had some hope.....

Anyway, the hull wasn't damaged thanks to the remnants of the huge Nakuma. Once again, Ark's purpose was the protection of the Silver Star. The Nakuma's remnants bought him some time.

"Okay! Yes! Come at any time! I'll turn you all into scrap metal!"

Kwa kwa kwa kwa! Kwa kwa kwa kwa!

Ark fired the shells in a trance. His shooting skills were poor but Ark didn't need it to fire the gun turrets. He checked that the shells hit and then moved it to the next area. Therefore the Nakuma fell like autumn leaves. Meanwhile the wreckage in front of the ship continued to build as more Nakuma died. The situation changed once 20 minutes had passed. The wreckage piled up in front of the Silver Star suddenly fluctuated. Then the wreckage started rising up?

“What, what the? This.....perhaps?”

Parts of the wall extended on both sides. Machine parts started attaching to it like it was a magnet. No, it wasn't only mechanical parts. It started to drag the Nakuma near it. The resulting shape was.....

“A huge Nakuma!”

Not long ago the number of Nakuma in front of the wall had decreased. He thought it was for their self-protection but that wasn't the case. The Nakuma had absorbed the wreckage where Ark couldn't see and created a huge Nakuma. He looked in dumb surprise at the wreckage morphed into a huge humanoid form. The massive Nakuma started coming towards the Silver Star! The wall that had been blocking the enemy's attack had become an enemy!

“D-dammit! Is this Transformers or something? What type of transformation is this?”

Kwa kwa kwa kwa! Kwa kwa kwa kwa!

Ark cursed and fired the shells towards the arms. The mechanical parts fell every time there was an explosion. The wrist broke before it reached the Silver Star and a huge hand fell to the ground. But after a brief moment, the metal parts were fused with the body again and another arm was made. That wasn't all.

-The hull has received damage!

<-57>

-The hull has received damage!

<-76>.....

The red messages kept on appearing on the monitor. Once the wall turned into a huge Nakuma, the remaining Nakuma's bullets started hitting the hull. But Ark had no time to pay attention to those Nakuma.

'The damage isn't that big. But that.....'

The huge Nakuma's arm! It had an enormous weight! If it hit the ship then it would be a fatal blow.

'I have to do whatever it takes to stop that arm!'

Luckily the huge Nakuma's movement was slow. In addition, the volume was too big and the parts lacked cohesion so they easily fell off when hit. However the Nakuma could just absorb more parts so it was a relentless war of attrition. And a message suddenly popped up!

-The ammunition of the turret has finished!

* You must turn off sleep mode in order to replace it.

Cheolkeok! Cheolkeok! Cheolkeok! Cheolkeok!

There was just a blank sound when he pulled the trigger.

“Heok! It is the end!”

Ark burst out as he looked up. The huge Nakuma’s arm! It was falling towards the turret.

Ku ku ku kung! Chwajijijik!

The Silver Star was wrapped in a blue flash and sparks flew as the Nakuma’s arm touched the top part of the turret.

“What, what the? This light is.....?”

-Hyung-nim, the energy charge is over!

Then he heard Tori’s voice over the Nymphe. The Silver Star had finished its energy charge and Tori deployed the shield with exquisite timing. Ark then shouted.

“So? The amount of energy?”

–It is currently at 53%. It has barely passed 50%. It will continue to rise while the fuel rod is connected.

“Then what are you waiting for? Prepare to fly away!”

–Understood!

The Silver Star started to rumble after Tori’s answer. The iron mold around the Silver Star started to break as it rose upwards.

Kwakwang!

At that moment the Silver Star started shaking. The huge Nakuma had started to beat at the Silver Star’s shield with its arm.

“Holy shit! Tori, rotate the hull in its direction!”

Ark yelled as he entered the turret on the other side. Meanwhile the turret on the other side was rotating towards the Nakuma. The moment the huge Nakuma appeared in front of him!

Kwa kwa kwa kwa! Kwa kwa kwa kwa!

Ark poured out the shells and exclaimed.

“Tori, you know the main weapon o the Silver Star? Can you use it?”

–The fuel rods are still connected and energy is being charged so one or two shots should be possible.

“Then prepare it! The goal is.....”

Ark’s eyes stayed on the giant Nakuma. He hadn’t seen it yet but the battleship had a main weapon. He needed to crush the giant Nakuma in one blow. But he wasn’t 100% sure. Even if he defeated the huge Nakuma, there was still the chance of being attacked by the young one. Ark came to that conclusion and his eyes rose towards the ceiling of the underground space!

“The ceiling! Above its head! That is the target!”

The Silver Star rose diagonally at Ark’s yell. Blue light particles started to gather in front of the hull pointed up. At first it was just fireflies before turning into an intense light in an instant. Then the light spewed out like lightning.

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

The light from the Silver Star’s main weapon fired upwards! The huge Nakuma tilted its head upwards as it tracked the trajectory of the light. When the lightning hit the ceiling, cracks spread on it and powder started falling. That was the beginning. Once cracks spread over the whole ceiling and iron mold started falling like hail as the balance was broken.

Kwa kwa kwa kwang, pepepeng!

The Nakuma underneath were crushed by the falling ceiling. Pieces of the huge Nakuma also fell off as it was hit. It was the same for the Silver Star. Sparks kept on occurring on the surface of the shield.

–Hyung-nim! T-the cave.....

“Charge! Aim towards the spot hit by the lightning!

–But the ceiling is still impenetrable!

“Just do it anyway! If we hesitate anymore then we’ll turn out like the Nakuma! Just do as I say!”

–Ugh, I understand!

The Silver Star started rumbling. The Murat’s battleship that had been here for hundreds of years flew 100 metre upwards! The Silver ship aimed towards where cracks were spreading on the ceiling. Jet flames emerged from the rear as it kept on rushing. Ark fired the gun turret ahead of him. He pulled the trigger continuously as the shells hit the ceiling. The iron mold kept on pouring on top of the giant Nakuma. In such circumstances, it was still stretching its arms out towards the Silver Star but the arms kept on being buried by the rocks. But it was no longer Ark’s concern.

‘If I can’t penetrate through then I’ll die!’

Kwa kwa kwa kwa! Kwa kwa kwa kwa!

Ark only aimed the bullets towards the ceiling! However the ceiling was thicker than expected. He had been saving one gun just for this.

“Launch!”

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

The pillar of blue light was shot again! It hit the same place on the ceiling that the Silver Star was going to crash into! At the same time, there was a loud sound before the Silver Star popped out. They were surrounded by iron mold powder as the night sky unfolded before him.

“S-success! We finally emerged!”

Ark cried out as he looked up at the sky. The Silver Star flew for several hundred metres before the iron mold cave collapsed.

-Your level has risen.

-Your level has risen.....

Space 6: To Istana!

SPACE 6. To Istana!

Hwiiii-!

There was an intense wind blowing. Yellow sand caught by the wind covered the square. Then the people gathered at the square started complaining.

“Damn, the sector isn’t shielded so the intense wind is difficult to deal with.”

“You should clean your equipment. Having sand caught in the gun could cause problems.”

“Sheesh, I know that much already. I’ll check it before we go hunting.”

“Shhh, it’s beginning soon.”

A person nearby said in a low voice. The people chatting quickly shut their mouths. In the centre of the square where 100 people were gathered was ‘him.’ He was a blond man wearing an old, furred cloak over faded leather armour! The user nicknamed Rapid.

‘Damn, why is it like this.....?’

A frustrated sigh emerged from Rapid’s mouth. Despite being killed, he had received amnesty after the federation’s victory and returned to Istana. And he finally arrived here after a journey that lasted several days.

-Sector S-20 Administration

Manager: Ark

Sector S-20! This was where Ark was located. His emotions soared as he saw the name Ark. He went through many trials to come here! When he thought about it, he made quite a number of mistakes on the way here. But now it was the end. He finally reached the place where Ark was!

.....That's what he thought.

"Did you come to see Hyung-nim?"

It was an alien called Hegel who greeted him.

"I don't know why you're searching for Hyung-nim but he isn't here right now."

"What?"

"Yes, he left just a while ago."

"A little while ago? Where did he go? Where?"

Hegel puffed up at Rapid's question.

"I'm not sure I should say this.....well, I don't know actually.....a federation officer came to visit and he flew back to Tatuine. We assumed that he needed Hyung-nim's help. Huhuhu, the administrator of this sector is someone like that. He is the one who received the title of Beltana and Athamas' Hero. I'm the younger brother of someone like that."

Rapid felt like he was hit in the head with a hammer. He had left Tatuine as soon as he returned to meet Ark here. Yet Ark was now heading towards Tatuine. He left 30 minutes before Rapid arrived.

'Then the airship with the mark of the federation.....'

Ark must've been riding the airship he saw just before arriving at S-20.

'What is this? Are you playing with me now?'

He thought angrily.

"Then when is he coming back?"

"I don't know."

He might not even return. Rapid was worried about that part. Should he go to Tatuine or wait for Ark in S-20. But his worries didn't last long. He was impatient after Ark was sent to Beltana and eventually committed a crime.

'I won't repeat the same mistakes.'

Rapid made up his mind. This time he would wait for Ark in S-20. Since then

Rapid sat in front of the signpost erected at S-20's management centre. Rapid didn't dare go to the hunting ground in case Ark returned. He also reduced his sleeping hours and didn't leave the capsule.

"What? That guy?" Why is he just sitting there?"

"He's waiting for Hyung-nim."

"Ark? When is Ark coming back?"

"I don't know. Therefore he is just waiting over there."

"That guy is just staring. He should go around to the hunting ground until Hyung-nim returns."

"I said that too but he refused. He seems really eager to meet Hyung-nim."

"That is a bit intense. Why on earth does he want to meet Hyung-nim so badly?"

"He didn't explain it properly. He says that he doesn't really know."

"He doesn't know? Is he stupid?"

Mellin muttered with a silly expression. Then Hegel approached and whispered.

"By the way. Before that pioneer was talking in his sleep. He kept on muttering Hyung-nim's name and fate."

"Fate? Don't tell me....."

Mellin glanced at Rapid with surprise.

"Is he different? The body is male but inside he is a girl.....something like that. Is he attached to Ark? Yes, that explains it. There is no other reason for a man to wait for a man. That brat, isn't he being a stalker? Ugh, a stalker! How scary."

"Hik! T-then what should we do?"

"What else? He hasn't actually committed a crime. We can't kick out someone who purchased a lifetime voucher for S-20 for no reason. We just have to leave him for Ark."

He received the gay treatment! Rapid didn't move from in front of the office.

Thus he managed to unintentionally learn some things after a few days passed. After listening to Hegel and Mellin talking, he discovered that Ark became the administrator of S-20 because of his Hero titles. And he had brought up S-20 to its current state.

‘Ark.....he certainly isn’t ordinary.’

Other people might just dismiss it as luck. There was a time where Rapid also dismissed Ark’s actions as luck. If that luck was repeated several times then it had to be skill. He definitely had something that was different from others. This sector was a good example. S-20 had an amazing level of growth. He used the ‘lifetime free pass’ and used Slayer, Leon and Melina to promote the sector, causing the population to reach 1,500 in a fortnight.

‘When considering the previous Ark, I shouldn’t be surprised at this degree but.....’

Ark also made a few mistakes. The first was that he hastily put S-20 together to gather pioneers. The problem was that the sector wasn’t equipped with some proper systems so the users experienced a lot of problems.

“We had that place first when another party interrupted. Shouldn’t the sector manager arbitrate this? Please firmly establish some rules!”

“Isn’t this too irresponsible?”

“If you operate this way then I’ll rather receive a refund for my lifetime voucher!”

“Look. A few days ago this merchant entered my store and now he is selling the same goods. Did he receive permission as well? Are you telling me to go out of business?”

“Some guys set up a shop in front of the dungeon. I heard that the merchant paid the registration fee and taxes like me. Then I’ll also move the store in front of the dungeon.”

It was natural for there to be conflict when the population suddenly increased. S-20 still hadn’t established a system so the conflicts between users and NPCs started to rise. Ark’s first mistake was not predicting this situation in advance and creating some rules. His second mistake was leaving it after a few

days.

“So.....it is.....”

“The merchandise and location of the shops hasn’t been formally decided yet.....”

“There will be a solution as soon as the administrator returns.....”

He had entrusted management to Mellin and Hegel. However these NPCs didn’t have any jobs related to sector management. That’s why they didn’t know how to handle the storm of complaints. They couldn’t resolve the issues so the situation was just exacerbated and the vicious cycle repeated.

‘This has nothing to do with me but.....’

Once again, Rapid was born to a very wealthy family. He had study business administrator to inherit his father’s business so he knew the solutions as soon as he heard the problem. He watched Hegel and Mellin before making up his mind. It was irritating.

Noisy! Utter confusion!

The users and NPCs gathered in front of the management office with their complaints. Rapid was sitting in front of the signpost. He was tired from waiting for Ark so he couldn’t stand the noise.

Itchy, restless.

‘Dammit, I can’t leave it like this!’

In the end Rapid failed to stop himself.

“Mellin-nim, Hegel-nim, listen to me for a moment. I want to say something.”

Rapid quickly explained to both of them the solution. He came up with two types of roadblocks to stop the incoming complaints. In order to eliminate conflict between users, he set up the ‘S-20 Dungeon’s Ten Temporary Rules.’ He also established the ‘S-20’s Ten Temporary Commerce Rules’ in order to address the complaints of the merchants and limited the store location area.

“Ohh! Indeed!”

“This will reduce a lot of the complaints!”

Mellin and Hegel said with admiration at Rapid's proposal. It was natural. Rapid had gained practical experience from his father's business. He established rules without a single crack in them! The complaints instantly declined once Mellin and Hegel implemented the rules.

'Now I can sleep better.'

However the real sleepless hours started from then on. The population that had stalled for a while started to increase again and new problems occurred. In addition, more complex issues with the surrounding sectors started to pop up once the population increased. Every time Mellin and Hegel came to Rapid with the problem.

"Hey, what are your thoughts on this issue?"

"What would you do if several pioneers are dissatisfied with the rules?"

'Dammit, I should've just left it alone.....'

But he had already started. He couldn't fake ignorance anymore. In the end Rapid settled into the office and handled the issues. Thus far it was okay.

"Hey, is there someone called Ark here?"

A pioneer came to S-20 a few days ago.

"Hasn't that Ark been farting a lot of nonsense lately? He might be a war hero but I'm here to inform him that there are other skies above him. Bring me Ark immediately. I want to apply for a duel!"

"Hyung-nim isn't here right now."

"Ha, stop playing around. Is he hiding? He needs to prove his bragging. Bring him out within 3 minutes. I have 100 subordinates. How about it? Do you want me to call all of my subordinates? Eh? Either he comes out or I'll burn him out."

The bearded man threatened. There were always people like this in games. They had the mind of a kid and wanted to prove they were the best just because they had a high level. Rapid had also been annoyed by guys like this in the previous game. There were an endless number of these people. Rapid ignored him. However.....

"Kikikiki. Why, are you scared? Is the administrator so frightened that he has

to hind behind his henchmen? Ark.....it is the same name as that guy in New World. The so-called most powerful user. Don't make me laugh. That was only possible because I wasn't playing the game. If I was there then he would have no chance. I saw Ark on the broadcast and he looked completely stupid. The administrator here is imitating the name Ark so I know what standard he is."

Ppajik.

The veins on Rapid's forehead throbbed.

"You said you wanted to have a duel with Ark?"

"Then? What? Are you going to be my opponent instead of Ark?"

"That is possible. No, you are correct."

"Kikiki, did you snap because I insulted your leader? Okay. I'll take care of his follower while waiting for Ark. The duel application is received."

-A duel has started!

<A duel is a battle system where pioneers can legitimately resolve their dispute. When both sides agree to a duel, the person who kills the other won't become chaotic.

The person who died won't lose experience and can immediately resurrect at the Fairy. However the normal costs of resurrection still applies>

'It turned out like this.'

Rapid sighed as he looked at the information window. Then the bearded man laughed and pulled out a machine gun.

"Kukukuku. Why, are you scared to duel? But it is too late. Regret it after I cut off your head. Now I'll give you time to take out your weapon."

“This is my weapon.”

Rapid indicated to a pistol hanging on his waist. Then bearded man gave him an astounded look and said.

“Hey, are you kidding? Can’t you see this? You live in this sector so you might not know but this is a limited edition M-620 assault rifle created by Hell Lion. The warhead has a special ceramic coating to increase the penetration power and it fires 20 shots a minute. Do you understand? The moment I pull the trigger you will disappear without a trace.....”

Tang-! Tang-! Tang-!

-Headshot-III x3!

<You have inflicted a serious blow and the enemy will receive additional 200% damage>

The bearded man dropped the M-620 that he was so proud of. It should’ve ended there!

“This bastard! A surprise attack? Again! Bring it on! This time the M-620.....”

Tang-! Tang-! Tang-!

“L-last time was a mistake. I got distracted. Again! Again! This time.....”

Tang-! Tang-! Tang-!

“No! I just suddenly got a cramp in my fingers! Hey, you! Now? This bastard! Why aren’t you waking up? Get up and accept my duel application! I’ll show you my skills! The M-620 has also been strengthened!”

The bearded man kept on yelling. If someone died in a duel then they could resurrect straight away without any experience loss. From then on, the bearded man would run to S-20 as soon as he resurrected at the Fairy of another sector and apply for a duel. Of course he had to pay the cost of resurrection but he had the finest air bike so he wasn’t a user who cared about money. Anyway,

Rapid was in a disastrous position.

‘I haven’t slept properly for a few days and now I have to keep on fighting this asshole.....’

He really wanted to kill him! However he committed a crime and had just been freed. And now he was at Ark’s sector so he couldn’t commit a crime. So far he had fought the bearded man 13 times! Now the duel between Rapid and the bearded man was very famous throughout S-20. Spectators would flock every time the bearded man applied for a duel.

“Huhuhu, this time it will be different. Last time I couldn’t aim because of the sudden dust that entered my eye due to the wind. But this time.....”

“It came! This time!”

The bearded man muttered ‘this time’ in every duel so it became like a mantra to him. However this wasn’t what the spectators were waiting for.

“Take this! The M-620 that launches 20 bullets in 1 minute!”

Tang-! Tang-! Tang-!

The bearded man lifted his machine gun and 3 shots were fired. But the bearded man’s head was the one with holes in them. Not one of them missed. 3 bullets hit the same place with an error of 1 mm. One hole for all the hits! It was the sign of a master marksman. But the remarkable thing was that he fired it at a tremendous rate!

“D-did you see?”

“No, I didn’t see it this time.”

“You didn’t see the movement of him pulling out the gun?”

“Besides, there is no sign of many holes on the bearded man. Does that mean they all hit the same place?”

“It’s no joke. Is he from the national shooting team?”

This was the reason for the spectators. Rapid had been growing his rapid fire and hit rate since starting Galaxian! Now he was near the level of a superhuman. Once the number of duels went over 10, users started to visit just

to watch the duels. But none of them directly approached Rapid. The reason why.....

“Wow! This time was also very nice! Hyung-nim is great!”

Hegel ran over after the duel.

“It isn’t great. I just.....”

Rapid stumbled as he turned towards Hegel. He handled increasingly more complaints and he had to duel the bearded man 1~2 every day. The number of hours he was sleeping reduced so he felt dizzy whenever the tension was released. Then Hegel quickly backed away with surprise.

“I’m sorry. I’m not interested in something like this!”

“What.....”

Rapid tilted his head with confusion.

“Did you see? Did you see? That alien backed away from him in panic?”

“The rumours were true. Did you see it?”

“There is a reason he is waiting for the administrator while barely sleeping. Ya, this is scary. Then it doesn’t matter to him if they are men or aliens?”

“Hey hey, don’t make eye contact. He might imprint on you when he is tired.”

The spectators gossiped and scattered as they avoided Rapid’s attention. Rapid had ears so he also heard such talk. However the rumours would just multiply if he denied it so he pretended ignorance. Anyway.....Rapid sighed as he stared after them.

‘Ark, where are you and what are you doing?’

“I don’t know where this is.”

Susak susak, susak susak.

“I don’t know what I’m doing.”

Susak susak, susak susak.

Ark mechanically looked around. It was an endless dark space with countless

stars scattered around.

“This game is set with the backdrop of space pioneering.....”

This was the first time he truly realized that setting. He had started Galaxian for more than 5 months. In the meantime he had spent time on the space station R-14, the federation’s main planet Istana, the frozen planet of Beltana and Amara. He had toured quite a few planets. However he had used the Star Gate to move and the ship had instantly warped to Amara’s port. Moving on a ship that used warp didn’t make him feel like he was travelling the universe. But now he felt like the galaxy was in fact the main stage. It was natural. Right now Ark was in the middle of space! He had spent 4 days watching the universe!

“Damn, I thought it would be okay once I escaped from Amara.....”

Certainly!

This trip gave Ark more than he expected.

Character Information Window			
Name	Ark (R-02788)	Level	107
Species	Human	Occupation	Elim’s Heir
Fame	8,520	Adventure	1,720
Health	2,700 (+90)	Mental Power	50 (+340)
Mana	0	Force	1,825
Strength	270 (+38)	Agility	335 (+41)
Stamina	425 (+18)	Wisdom	40 (+13)
Intelligence	260 (+68)	Luck	55 (+8)
* Title			

Cleaning Foreman (Agility + 3)

Ignorant Destroyer (Wisdom -10, Strength +7,
Stamina +7)

Beltana's Hero (Strength, Agility, Stamina, Wisdom,
Intelligence, Luck +3) Athamas' Hero (Strength,
Agility, Stamina, Wisdom, Intelligence, Luck +5)
Mediator (Wisdom, Intelligence +15)

* Contribution: Galactic Federation 11,850, Aschulat
500

* Affiliation: Dark Eden (CEO)

*Body Coating: Survivor

+ Environmental adaptation increases by 50% due
to the Survivor coating.

+ The Survivor coating reduces the drop rate of
Satiety by 30%.

+ The Survivor coating will reduce fall damage by
50%.

+The 'Clairvoyance' effect of the Survivor coating is
applied.

The first was experience. He had been level 99 when he checked in the Abyss

of Despair. He had already gained 5 levels from killing the Nakuma in the dungeon. Then he defeated the huge Nakuma and gained 5 levels in one go! But it didn't stop there.

“100% experience is applied so I should gain 5 more.”

Ark gained new information through this experience. When he killed using the weapons loaded on the airship, he only got 5~10% of the experience! When thinking about it, it was natural. Someone firing the gun at dozens of enemies wouldn't get the same experience as a warrior killing the opponent directly. If they received the same experience then the engineers who moved the Gigantic would be hundreds of levels already. The reason was the penalty applied to experience. However, 5~10% of the total number of enemies wasn't a joke. He had killed all the Nakuma in the Abyss of Despair when it caved in. Therefore he gained 3 levels in just 30 minutes! In a day he had gone from level 99 to 107.

-The <Lost Parts (Selection Quest)> has failed.

This message appeared when the cave collapsed. But Ark had no more interest in that airship. He had gained the Murat's battleship that had been sleeping for hundreds of years in the Abyss of despair, the Silver Star! Unlike the airship that had become junk, this one had RPGs as well as two turrets attached to the wings. He didn't care about one quest!

“The Silver Star! Break through the atmosphere!”

Roaaaaar!

The Silver Star rose vertically as it escaped from the Abyss of Despair. It soared through the atmosphere and entered space in a matter of minutes.

.....It lasted up to there.

“You can't warp?”

“That's not it, rather.....”

Tori scratched his head.

“This engine has been enclosed in iron mold for hundreds of years. The inside has partially eroded and there are some major areas that don't work properly.

Some parts of the engine need repair.”

“So? Can you fix it?”

“It is possible with the emergency repair kit but the problem is that it will take some time.”

“How long will it take?”

“I think it should take at least one week.”

Tori hesitated before replying. He thought he had escaped from Amara and now he had to wait a week so it was frustrating. He had left a lot of work behind in S-20. He left Mellin and Hegel in charge but they weren’t professional NPCs so he couldn’t help worrying. But what could he do? He needed the Silver Star’s warp feature to return to Istana. Even if there was another way, he wouldn’t give up the Silver Star just for a faster trip.

‘This is the ship that I obtained for free.’

That was Ark’s main thought.

“It can’t be helped. Then do it meticulously. Should I do anything to help?”

“You can help.”

Tori replied like he had been waiting for the question.

“Actually, the more serious problem is the exterior of the ship. The iron mold is attached to external devices like the antenna and particle accelerator so it won’t work properly. I will repair the internal parts while Hyung-nim will remove the iron mold from the outer hull.”

“Outside? In space?”

“Hyung-nim just got this ship and now you can experience space personally.”

“Indeed.”

Ark accepted Tori’s suggestion. Of course, humans couldn’t enter the universe even with the body coating. There was no atmosphere or air in space. The temperature also decreased the further it was from a sun so outside was -270 degrees or absolute zero point. Therefore even pioneers who received a body coating needed to wear space suits!

-External Work Space Suit (Special)

Item Type: Special Overalls for Space

Sometimes problems will occur on a ship where working outside is required so a space suit should be worn. This space suit is made of a special synthetic fibre that forms a shield around the body to protect it from air pressure and temperature changes. It is also equipped with a small jet to allow you to deal with emergency situations. But in order to prevent space sickness, it's recommended to work for 30 minutes and rest for 1 hour.

<Jet fuel: 100/100>

There were several space suits in the cabin of the Silver Star. But it wasn't a large space suit like in the movies. The pioneers in this era all received body coatings so they didn't need the huge space suit like previous generations. It felt like dressing in plastic clothes.

"Hah, isn't this exciting?"

This was the first time Ark appreciated the universe. He felt a sense of weightlessness that he never encountered anywhere else. Stars continuously appeared around his arms and legs as he floated around. It literally felt like he was floating in the universe! However he didn't come out here to play.

"This feeling is fun but it is actually hard to move."

Ark muttered as he set one foot on the hull of the Silver Star. The weightlessness made it hard for him to move his legs. But Ark quickly solved the problem.

“Walking in space is like walking on earth when my balance is disturbed. Then it wasn’t necessary to keep his foot on the hull. I just need to distribute my weight.”

Ark already knew a method of walking like this. It was the Swamp Walking he learnt from the Charenjok!

Susususuk, susususuk.

As expected, his centre didn’t become unbalanced once he used Swamp Walking. It could be used on swamp, snow and now in space! The skill could be used in quite a few places. After a few hours, Ark got used to the movement and started cleaning in earnest.

“There really is a lot stuck on here.”

The ship had been closed in iron mold for hundreds of years. There were small and large chunks of iron mold attached to the hull. It might look like a daunting task for one week but.....Ark was an expert in this area.

“Now shall I get started? Facilities Maintenance!”

It was Facilities Maintenance that he learnt cleaning the pipes in R-14! The name was Facilities Maintenance but it involved scrubbing and cleaning skills. It was also Lv. 2! Ark took out a dust cloth and triggered the Lv. 2 Facilities Maintenance skill.

Susak susak, susak susak. Flash!

Light gleamed from the hull as iron mold was cleaned off it. It was like washing a new car. Once the iron mold was cleaned off, the ship became increasingly silver like its name.

“Yes, isn’t this more worthy of being my spacecraft?”

He had a lot left to do. But it wasn’t like there were no valuable parts. The Silver Star was already Ark’s. Ark took a rest for 1 hour after every 30 minutes. During that time he explored the Silver Star. The Silver Star was a 100 metres large battleship with the bridge, cockpit, engine room and 10 different rooms. However Ark could only check three places.

-Cabin-

A place where soldiers can take a rest.

If you relax in here then your health will recover 4 times faster. And if you rest for 6 hours then it is possible to get a buff effect. In addition, if you log out of the cabin then you can get a buff effect when you connect again.

<Function: Buff effect after resting>

-Warehouse-

This can hold a variety of weapons, ammo, supplies and loot obtained from space exploration.

<Function: Can contain cargo up to 150 tonnes>

-Infirmary-

A place to treat unexpected accidents or sailors injured in battle.

The universe contains numerous risks. Threats of an enemy or unknown diseases are some of those risks. The infirmary is necessary to cope with such problems. There is an x1.5 bonus when using

recovery ampoules in here. You can also use the medical devices to figure out the cause and cure of unknown diseases.

<Function: Figure out the cause of a disease and develop cures>

Ark had confirmed these 3 rooms. 4 out of the remaining 7 were empty and the door for 3 wouldn't open.

"I'm not sure why it is like this."

Tori replied. However Ark could guess the reason. The reason why Ark hadn't bought a ship wasn't because of a lack of interest. There were many reasons but the largest one was money! As always, the problem was funding. A small ship usually cost 10,000 gold! Until recently Ark had been busy raising the agent registration fee. In fact, most of the current ships belonged to guilds who gathered their funds together. But Ark had been thinking about buying a ship one day. So he spent some time looking at ships and found that there were some facilities that couldn't be used when the owner's level was low.

'Those are probably the rooms that won't open.'

Of course this was just Ark's guess. He had no intention of forcibly opening it. It might cause problems when there were already issues with the Silver Star. He had to be careful right now. He could try to force it open once he had safely returned to Istana. Anyway!

Ark found beneficial ways to spend his time. But that all changed once he spend 96 hours in space. At first he thought space was wonderful but now he felt motion sickness. Even more.....

Susak susak, susak susak.

Ark had spent 4 days cleaning. Work for 30 minutes, 1 hour break, 30 minutes working, 1 hour break.....the work was boring now that he repeated it so many times. The problem was that he still had 3 days left to wait.

“I’d rather be doing something else, anything is good.”

It was right then.

Syuuuuuuuu!

Suddenly he heard the sound of the wind in his ears. Complete silence. Normally the universe was completely silent. So Ark thought aloud in order to make noise. It really felt like he had lost his spirit while cleaning the iron mold. Then why was there suddenly a wind sound?

“Am I really hearing this?”

Ark looked around with a bewildered expression.

Tong-!

Something invisible hit Ark. The impact felt like a truck had crushed into him. Ark bounced back 100 metres before stopping. It was thanks to the wire attaching him to the Silver Star. But Ark couldn’t move one finger. An immense power kept on hitting Ark.

“Ugh, Tori! Tori! What is this? Answer me!”

-Hyung-nim, are you alright?

“Damn, do you think I’m okay? What is this?”

–It is probably the freezing cosmic wind.

“Cosmic wind?”

–Yes, there are times when an electromagnetic storm will rage in space. But don’t worry, it will sweep past. You’re attached to the wire so you just need to wait until the storm passes.

‘Damn, this guy’s mouth.....’

He hadn’t experienced even 1 minute in this storm! There was a saying to be careful in space. Luckily the wire was attached or else he would be lost in space. But just before he sighed with relief.

Piping!

There was the sound of wire being released from its hole.

“U-unbelievable! T-the wire.....”

At the same time, Ark started to drift away from the Silver Star. He rotated uncontrollably like a broken kite as he was battered by the storm. This occurred for a bit before the storm vanished as suddenly as it appeared. However Ark was still rotating and drifting away.

Struggle, struggle.

The Silver Star was receding further into the distance. Ark sighed with relief. Fortunately he could still see the Silver Star. It was incredible far away but it wouldn't be a problem if he turned in the right direction and used the space suit's jet. Ark activated the jet device.

-There isn't enough energy to operate the jet device!

“Dammit, there really are various problems.”

Ark muttered with an annoyed expression. Things always became twisted for him. But Ark still didn't worry about it.

“Tori, reply. Tori, hey! What are you doing?”

That was when Ark became serious.

“Why aren't you replying? Perhaps communication doesn't work when I'm this far? This is serious. If Tori doesn't know my position.....no! What will happen to the Silver Star if I die? Absolutely not! I can't die in space. I need to find a way to return to the Silver Star!”

No matter how he struggled, he just ended up rotating in place. Then something popped into Ark's head.

‘Yes, there is that!’

“Armour armament!”

Ark immediately pulled out his battle suit. He turned his body towards the Silver Star and shouted.

“Hyper Booster!”

It was the newly acquired skill that he received when his battle suit evolved!

Jets appeared on the heels of his feet. Flames spewed out and Ark's body shot forward like a projectile. It was an accelerating skill that allowed him to move 100 metres at 200 km/hr. In space there was no air resistance so he flew a few kilometres with just one use.

"Hyper Booster! Hyper Booster!"

Ark used the skill 10 times and managed to return to the Silver Star. And he grabbed the handle of the outside door.

-A new skill (☆) has been learnt.

Spacewalk (User, Active): Space is a completely different world from the planets you've experienced up to now. Strength and agility is important on planets but in space you need spatial perception and parallel abilities. This skill gives you the ability to take advantage of your power in space. Any outstanding warrior who doesn't understand the nature of space won't be able to exert any strength. A true pioneer needs to learn Spacewalk.

<Penalties applied to the body in space is reduced by 20%>

A skill appeared out of nowhere! However Ark couldn't afford to look at the information window. His heart was still racing from the experience of being in space without any equipment. Fortunately he used the booster to come back but recalling the situation caused him to breathe faster with panic. He entered the Silver Star and sat down for a bit to alleviate that fear.

"Phew, that was like having acrophobia. If I couldn't return then I might've become frightened of space."

Ark wiped the sweat off his chest and head.

“Hihihihi, I’m finally free!”

He heard Tori’s laughter.

“Hihihi, I did well to spend some time here. That Ark bastard. How long did you think I would be your slave? You might’ve forgotten but I’m a hamster who explored the universe before. That cosmic wind really had great timing. I disconnected the wire and removed the fuel for the jet device and now Ark is lost in space! Hihihihi, I don’t feel bad. This is his fault for annoying me. And he is a pioneer so dying isn’t a big deal.”

All his questions were answered in that moment. Why it took a week to repair the Silver Star, why the wire broke during the cosmic wind and why he couldn’t get a response from Tori.

“Tori, it’s me. Over.”

Ark changed the Nymphe to communication mode and said. Ark’s voice flowed from Tori’s Nymphe who giggled. He just whistled and laughed like he had no interest.

“Hihihihi, what a stupid guy. He still doesn’t understand the situation? It is no use calling me. Stop making noise and just die.”

–Are you still now answering me?

“Ha! He’s still trying to threaten me? With just words? Go to hell.”

–Let’s see, who will be the one who goes to hell?

“Eh? What? Is my Nymphe in transmission mode? How did he hear me?”

–Turn around and you’ll understand.

“What?”

Tori frowned and turned his head. And.....blood drained from his face as he stiffened.

–Now answer me. What should I do to you?

Ark spoke into his Nymphe from behind Tori.

“Now, let’s clean this up.”

Ark tinkered with his Nymph and said.

“You will always obey me. Follow without me giving you a command. And execute my orders without any complaints. This isn’t by force but through the request of the applicant Tori. Is that right?”

Nod nod.

“What? You don’t agree with me words?”

Tori frantically spoke after seeing Ark’s frown.

“Ah, no. I agree with everything!”

“Was that so hard to say?”

“No.”

Tori robotically answered. Tori had used the cosmic wind to abandon Ark. That cunning fellow planned a coup and this was the price Tori received. Merciless violence for 5 hours! XX, OO, even $\Delta\Delta$the violence was so dreadful it couldn’t be expressed in words and had to be covered by a mosaic.

‘I’m still not satisfied!’

Ark didn’t stop there. He had almost become lost in space and died. Furthermore, that guy had been planning to seize the Silver Star over the last few days. He didn’t know what that hamster would do in the future. Even beating him for 4 days and 3 nights would be insufficient. Because after that Tori had the excuse of distance. Tori still hadn’t completed his prison sentence on Stael. He would inevitably become a prisoner again if he returned to Istana with Ark. That’s why he tried to betray Ark.

.....That was Tori’s explanation.

His explaining was to lessen the punishment but Ark found the reason convincing. Therefore he significantly cut the punishment to only 5 hours. Of course there were some conditions.

“I didn’t think of that problem. But you gave intelligence to Irina so you won’t

be treated as a runaway. Well, that was the Katz' trap. Irina-nim should explain the situation. Hopefully you might receive a probation. I'll also use my connections to help. But you conspired to kill me and steal the Silver Star."

"That....I.....please forgive me."

"Okay. I'll forget about the past few days. But you have two options. Either spend 10 years paying for your sins by obeying all my commands. Or pay for all your sins right now. The punishment for your sins.....I'll leave that to your imagination."

Tori wasn't worried. Because he didn't need to imagine it.

"The first one! The first! I will listen to you!"

That was how they formed a contract.

It was recorded on the Nymphe that Tori voluntarily (?) formed a contract. Now the Silver Star just needed to be repaired so they could return to Istana.

"Tori, how much longer is needed for repairs?"

"12 hours....."

"Make it 8 hours. Finish repairing it before then."

"B-but....."

"I will finish cleaning the external hull in 7~8 hours. If you can't finish the repairs by then, it might be better to throw yourself out into space. Do you understand?"

Tori didn't need to think about it. His mosaic body jumped up and ran to the engine room. When Ark finished cleaning in 8 hours, Tori were waiting for him.

"The repairs are finished!"

As expected, his work ethic changed once Ark used a different method. Ark took the captain seat on the bridge and gave the order.

"Okay. Start the Silver Star's navigation device, the target is Istana. Depart!"

"Yes!"

Tori sat down in the cockpit and busily started using the dashboard. He finally

pressed a red button and the Silver Star changed into a flash of light. Towards the centre of the galactic federation, Istana!

Space 7: Pioneer Quest

SPACE 7. Pioneer Quest

Kwajijiji! Kwajijiji!

Sparks occurred in outer space. The sparks started swirling and formed a ring. The space rippled and a spaceship emerged from the centre. The spaceship with a gleaming silver body was the Silver Star.

“Istana.....”

Ark looked out the window at the giant planet below him. The planet was a mixture of green, brown and blue and it was humanity’s second home. It had been 24 hours since he warped from the Harmadon constellation. The Silver Star carried Ark and Tori thousands of light years and finally arrived at Istana.

‘That warp voyage wasn’t so bad.’

He had originally thought of warp travel like a Star Gate. However warp travel on a spaceship wasn’t so comfortable. Warp travel artificially created a wormhole to another dimension where the ship would travel faster. Unlike transport ships that had regular routes, it could be dangerous for a private ship to use warp. The wormhole could travel through the wrong place, the hull could be severely damaged by an electromagnetic cloud or in rare cases there might be monsters wandering. But this trip was relatively smooth.

“Hyung-nim, we’ve arrived!”

It was thanks to the hamster who was an experienced sailor. Although Tori did spend a lot of the warp travel in the infirmary treating his wounds.

“Okay. Then let’s go to Tatuine.”

“Huh? No, that.....”

While Tori was hesitating.

Kwaaaaah! Kwaaaaah!

There was a succession of light exploding around the Silver Star and three spaceships appeared. They were smaller than the Silver Star with the logo of the federation on them.

-Communication is being received on the public channel.

Then an information window appeared. He connected the communication and someone in uniform appeared on the monitor.

-Who is the Captain?

"It's me."

—I am Ensign Bonan, leader of Istana's 3rd orbital garrison. Verification has determined that the UFO is not registered with the galactic federation. Therefore I am here to inform you that you are trespassing on the airspace of the galactic federation. Leave Istana's airspace immediately. If you want to enter then the ship and crew must be examined by the soldiers at garrison headquarters.

"H-Hyung-nim!"

Tori said in a tearful tone.

Ark was a little panicked at the unexpected situation. If he bought the ship through the normal route then it would be registered immediately to the federation and he could freely access Istana. However the Silver Star had been picked up on the frontier. Therefore it was treated as an unidentified flying object (UFO). Ark hadn't thought about this. Tori was also a criminal in the

federation. If they were investigated at the garrison headquarters then problems might occur.

‘But.....’

He had one method. He hadn’t expected the garrison to appear but it wasn’t an impossible situation.

“I want to ask you something.”

–Please say it.

“I would like to get in touch with the federation government in Tatuine.”

–Do you know someone in the central government?

“Yes, please contact Lieutenant Colonel Buldio who is the chief of the 1st Internal Affairs Division. And.....please contact the special advisor Marquis Martin as well.”

–Colonel Buldio? Marquis Martin?

Bonan stuttered with wide eyes. It was a natural reaction. The Internal Affairs department had significant influence in the government. And Marquis Martin was a special advisor on military matters so he had a powerful influence on the military. Ark had spoken names that were both heavyweights in the government and military! But Bonan was even more astonished by Ark’s next words.

“Give this message to both of them. Ark has returned.”

-Pathetic.

In an ancient shrine like building. Dozens of people dressed in robes were kneeling down in a spacious hall. Their heads were pointed towards the central dais. A black shape was swaying on the dais. Then the robed people heard a

voice in their heads.

–I worked hard on this plan for the past 10 years. 4 gates were prepared in order to bring the presence of the Great God into this star system. But 1 was destroyed while the other 3 haven't completed their mission.

“We're ashamed of ourselves.”

–Ashamed.....

The black shape quickly expanded.

–Do you think you will be forgiven with those words?

The voice exploded through their heads. The robed people grabbed their heads with moans and stuttered.

“P-please forgive us!”

“We'll do whatever it takes to recoup from these mistakes!”

“We will prepare the gate again!”

–Fools, if the gate could be made so easily then I wouldn't have spent 10 years doing it! We can't wait another 10 years while the Great God has been waning for hundreds of years. There is no guarantee he will have the force to enter the star system if he weakens further. And I'm also too weak to wait.

“T-then what do we do now?”

–We have no choice but to accelerate the timing.

“Accelerate?”

–We will break down the balance of the force with our own hands.

“That is our long cherished dream. But we haven't discovered the origin of the Force despite dozens of years of effort.”

–That is until now. But I managed to detect a weak force that had been activated with my holy senses. From now on we will launch an investigation into that constellation. But before we do this.

“What is it?”

–The ones who destroyed the gate. If we leave them alone then there is potential to repeat the same mistake. We won’t get 3 chances. If we fail another time then my body will have reached its limit and scattered to pieces. So we have to eliminate the annoying existences before we advance with our plan. Fenrir!

“Please give me a command, Grand Duke!”

The Grand Duke stood up. Then another 4 black shapes emerged in front of him.

–These are my subordinates. They are the survivors of the destroyed gate. I’ll give them to help you find those who are hindering us. And.....kill them! If they are pioneers then rip out their soul! Shatter the soul and scatter it! That is your only purpose from now on.

“I will carry out your order!”

The man replied while on his knees. Then everyone else in the room started kowtowing and chanting in unison.

“The Great God willing!”

“Cheeky fellow.”

A middle aged man said with an amazed expression.

“A mere pioneer dares to call the nobles of the galactic federation.”

“It can’t be helped. I have a good reason for calling Marquis-nim.”

“From what I recall you looked fine.”

“Then why didn’t you refuse my request?”

“That.....”

The middle aged man murmured before laughing.

“Well it’s already turned out like this. I was getting annoyed by the parrot like voices of the councillors. It isn’t a bad idea to mingle with you for a bit. A politician who hangs out with a hero will have their stock price rise.”

The middle aged man was Marquis Martin. And the young man he was looking at was Ark.

“Aren’t you exaggerating this a bit?”

“Not at all. Right now your name is more well know than mine about the federation soldiers. You are the most popular star among the soldiers right now. Look, don’t you see the soldiers scattered everywhere trying to get a glimpse of you?”

In fact, Ark had no idea it would be to this degree. After receiving the title of Beltana’s Hero, he had been dragged around Istana for a promotional tour right away. And he had no chance to meet the soldiers of the federation after the Athamas battle ended. So he hadn’t realized it but his popularity among the federation army was beyond his imagination. He realized this popularity after he entered the headquarters on Istana.

“I’m Ensign Bona from the communication. Welcome!”

An officer came running up after the ships had escorted the Silver Star. He saluted before saying.

“Ark-nim’s reputation is well known. I apologize for my rude behaviour. I am honoured that you will visit the 12th orbit garrison. As you requested, I’ve

passed on the message to Colonel Buldio-nim and Marquis Martin-nim. Please tell me if you feel an inconvenience while waiting. I will immediately take corrective measures!”

A UFO had suddenly appeared in orbit around Istana. If he was any other pioneer than the investigation at headquarters would be conducted with a heavy-handed attitude. But they rolled out the VIP treatment for Ark. It was the same with the other soldiers.

“It’s an honour to meet you!”

“I’m sorry but can I shake your hand?”

“If you sign the collar of my uniform then it will become an heirloom!”

Soldiers swarmed like a flock of bees around the Silver Star.

“Please sign this for me? My daughter is a big fan.”

Even the grey-haired director of the garrison asked him to sign something! Ark was a user who wasn’t even part of the top 50 rankings that the game exclusive news published. But that’s because they were focused on the federation, Aschulat and Rama users at the frontier and gathered statistics from the entire galaxy. So Ark and the Red Slaughterer weren’t included in the rankings. But if it was narrowed down to the galactic federation, especially the military then it was impossible for other users to surpass Ark’s fame.

Therefore there was a commotion when Marquis Martin arrived. And soldiers were still hanging around the place waiting for a chance to ask him to sign. Marquis Martin looked around at the soldiers and smiled.

“How great.”

“Why does that sound vaguely sarcastic?”

“No, I’m being serious. You are someone who amazes me every time.”

Marquis Martin stared at the Silver Star that had been placed in a hangar.

“This is the UFO you came aboard. It seems to be a 3rd class ship.....it is the first time I’ve seen one in a long time. You found it on Amara?”

“Yes.”

Ark nodded and Marquis Martin burst out laughing.

“The person I thought was dead appeared riding a UFO that turns out to be a 3rd class battleship that he just picked up. I’m not even surprised. No, is the ship the only thing you picked up? What about that guy?”

Marquis Martin looked behind Ark. The hamster rolled his eyes with an anxious look.

“Did you say his name was Tori?”

“Yes, so the problem I mentioned?”

“It’s not something I can decide by myself.”

Syuuuuuuuu!

Then 1 ship came flying into the hangar. Marquis Martin smiled as he saw the mark of the galactic federation on the wings.

“Here they come.”

Two people got off the ship. One was Buldio who gave him the <Rescue the Pursuers> question and behind him was Irina.

‘She came back unharmed.’

The last time he saw Irina was when they were escaping from the mine. At the time Irina’s airship had been hit by gunfire and was spouting smoke. He had been worried because it looked dangerous but she came back unharmed. Once again, the Fairy’s resurrection time depended on the user’s level and the

distance of the place of death to the registered Fairy. Therefore it took time to determine if a pioneer had died or not from the Fairy.

If it was the same planet then it would take several hours at most. However, if the registered place was Istana and they died on the Harmadon constellation that was thousands of light years away then the situation was serious. It could be a week before the Fairy received information about the dead. Depending on the level, it could even take 10 days. That's why it was hard to find users who reached level 200 despite Galaxian being open for over 4 months. The death penalty in Galaxian was no joke.

Anyway, it took Ark 8 days to return to Istana. The fact that she was here before Ark meant that she escaped unharmed from Amara. While Ark was busy thinking.

"Cough cough."

There was the sound of coughing. Buldio laughed at him as he turned around.

"Why are you staring a hole through the face of my subordinate?"

"Huh? No....."

"I understand your heart but let's focus on the agenda."

Buldio teased as he looked between Ark and Irina. Ark was blushing but Irina's face hadn't changed at all.

"Ark-nim, I'm thankful for what you've done. I heard about Ark-nim's achievements through Ensign Irina. Fortunately the group managed to return safely a week ago."

"Ah, yes....."

"The only question left is that friend's treatment."

Buldio looked at the frightened Tori.

“When I checked, it turns out that he is your accomplice in the event that sent you to Beltana and our friend here to 2 years in Stael. Right now his status is as an escaped prisoner.”

“But.....”

“I already know. He wasn’t the main one behind the breakout. And he tried to help Ensign Irina capture the criminals. That could certainly be called extenuating circumstances. However he still has 70% of his sentence left so a probation is difficult. But it might be possible if we use another method.”

“Another method?”

“Other than Tori, the Katz that escaped haven’t been arrested. We lost track of them on Amara. So we will postpone Tori’s imprisonment in order to keep him as a source of information. And if they get caught then he will be eligible for a probation. Only!”

Buldio stopped and glanced at Irina.

“Ensign Irina is in charge of arresting the escaped prisoners.”

Then Buldio looked back at Ark. In other words, Buldio mean to use this shortcut. And the person holding the hilt was Irina. Marquis Martin and Buldio clearly didn’t expect Irina to refuse. But who was Irina? She was a woman keen on follow the rules! Ark couldn’t imagine that Irina would accept a shortcut like this so easily.....

Irina glanced between Ark and Tori before nodding.

“I understand. I will handle it.”

Surprisingly she accepted it quite easily? Ark was confused but Buldio just nodded. Then he turned towards Marquis Martin and asked.

“Marquis Martin-nim?”

“I couldn’t hear anything.”

“Thank you.”

Thanks to Marquis Martin’s polite withdrawal, Buldio managed to solve a complicated problem. Once again, it wasn’t good to make enemies of the NPCs in Galaxian. Buldio then continued with a light voice like this was a routine business.

“Now the only thing left is to pay Ark-nim. The compensation for this mission is 1,000 gold. I couldn’t prepare the cash reward so here are some military scrips. It can be used like cash in the jurisdiction of the galactic federation.”

1,000 gold. It wasn’t cash but it could be used anywhere in the galactic federation! He expected that the quest reward would be high but this was beyond expectations. However Ark couldn’t just receive the scrips. Of course, the reason Ark accepted the quest was because of the reward but it was also because of Irina. He felt uncomfortable receiving the rescue reward in front of her. When Ark hesitated, Buldio smiled and said.

“I know Ark-nim didn’t accept this request for the reward. However it is only fair. Of course you need to receive it for your hard work. And it is coming from my pocket, not Ensign Irina’s. It is part of the government budget. Ark-nim doesn’t have to worry about Ensign Irina’s purse.”

“You should receive it. It will be needed soon.”

Marquis Martin then added.

“Thank you.”

-<Rescue the Pursuers> quest has been completed.

The message flashed when he received the scrip.

“Now my work is done. I’ll take this and go.”

Buldio rose with the paperwork and Irina also got up. Ark was surprised at their sudden actions and also stood up.

“Oh, that.....wait a minute.....”

“Is there something else you need?”

“No, that’s not it.....”

Ark scratched the back of his head and hesitated.

“You go out first. I need to discuss something with this friend.”

“Understood.”

Buldio nodded to Marquis Martin and left the meeting room. Ark’s gaze followed Irina’s departing back and he sighed. Ark had been looking forward to meeting Irina again on Istana. Once again, Ark had an interest in Irina. However Irina wasn’t an easy character to attach to and it was difficult to meet after returning from Beltana. But he met Irina again thanks to this mission. In addition, she went through a crisis and he saved her from death several times. He assumed that their relationship would alter a bit when they met again. And she did accept Buldio’s proposal. Ark wasn’t sure but it might be a sign of regard towards him. But that was it. Irina just left before he could say anything to her.

Ark sat down and asked in a testy voice.

“What did you want to talk about?”

“Your attitude changes quickly as soon as the woman left.”

“It’s not like that.”

“It isn’t? Look in the mirror. See what your expression is like right now.”

“Is that all you had to say?”

“Of course not.”

“Then say it.”

“I have two things to speak to you about.”

Marquis Martin laughed and continued.

“So.....the first reason is a request.”

“A request? Don’t tell me you want me to go to the battlefield again?”

Ark’s forehead wrinkled. Marquis Martin rubbed his beard and replied.

“So you still haven’t heard. The war is over. A few days ago I met with the Rama Ambassador and signed an armistice.”

“Huh? So suddenly.....”

“You are related to the reason why.”

Marquis Martin manipulated his Nymphe and it showed a 3D image. The 3D image surprisingly showed a red pentagram. Why did he suddenly sign a truce with the Rama and what did this image have to do with it? And how was Ark involved? Marquis Martin noticed his confused expression and continued.

“Is this the first time you’ve seen it?”

“Yes, what is that?”

“Not many people in the federation know this yet. This pattern appeared in an area thousands of kilometres in diameter and three areas in Galaxian changed at the same time. All of them simultaneously released a tremendous amount of negative energy.”

“Negative energy?”

“D-don’t tell me you’re talking about antimatter?”

Tori suddenly raised his head and shouted. Marquis Martin shot Tori a surprised look before nodding.

“So the hamster knows about it. Yes, it is a material with an opposite energy to most of the materials in this star system. Like the hamster said, it is called antimatter. Well I’m not an expert so I can’t explain antimatter in detail but it can be a huge threat to this star system. It was only for a second but that energy occurred throughout the galaxy.”

This was the reason for the sudden armistice. If the galaxy was threatened then the galactic federation, Aschulat and Rama would all be affected. However both sides couldn’t overlook the issues between them. They decided to temporarily stop the war and agreed to figure out information about this event first.

“But how is it related to me?”

“This magic circle.....I don’t want to use that term but I have nothing else to call it. Anyway, the place where the magic circle was created was the Harmadon constellation. Red rays shot up from 5 planets in the constellation and formed the magic circle. How about it? Do you have an idea now?”

“The red light.....”

The memory naturally formed in his head. It was the disc in the mine that shot up the red light!

“You seem to remember. I received the report from Colonel Buldio and learnt about the situation. My guess is that the red light you and Ensign Irina witnessed was one of the ones that formed the magic circle. In other words, you guys are the only one I know who was in range to witness the magic circle being made. Oh and 1 hamster as well.”

Marquis Martin looked directly at Tori after his words ended. It was a look

that asked if he knew anything else about the magic circle. But Tori shook his head.

“As expected the galactic federation, Rama and Aschulat are all interested in this phenomenon. I don’t know what the impact will be on the galaxy but I don’t want the Aschulat or Rama to figure out the information first. That’s why I was able to easily accept Buldio’s proposal regarding the hamster.”

“What do you mean?”

“The areas that changed due to the incident are all on the frontier. And the special treaty prohibits the military actions of all 3 forces in that region. Of course we can dispatch secret agents but the military can’t move. Therefore the Rama, Aschulat and federation have decided to mobilize agents. All agents belonging to the galactic federation will be requested to investigate the incident. Naturally that would include your agent Dark Eden.”

An information window popped up at Marquis Martin’s words.

-<Dark Omen (Pioneer Quest)>

You have listened Marquis Martin, a powerful noble of the federation explain about the incident that changed the galaxy. The changed occurred with the appearance of the magic circle that emitted a large amount of negative energy. The federation, Aschulat and Rama have felt the crisis and stop the war in the Bellin constellation to investigate. However, these changes occurred in the space

frontier and all three powers are prohibited from interfering there due to the space treaty. That's why they are mobilizing agents. The first pioneer to discover the facts behind this incident will have their reputation spread throughout the whole galaxy.

* Achievement Rate: 0/100%

Difficulty: A+

Pioneer quest. This was a main quest in Galaxian.

"Like I said, you are one of the few people who witnessed that scene. Ensign Irina is the personally assigned by the galactic federation for the same reason. The federation is an existence separate to the agent but you two can cooperate if the need arises. If the Katz who escaped from Stael are involved in the red light then this will be an extension of the mission to catch them. Therefore we need Tori on the mission even if it is under false pretences."

This was the reason why Irina accepted the shortcut.

"But I'm now....."

"I know. The administrator of a new sector has a lot of work to do. I'm not telling you to fly back to Harmadon right away. My gut feeling says that this won't have a simple solution. It is probably something that would require a lot of time. Ensign Irina will need to gather the federation agents so it doesn't matter if you have a slow start. Because this is a request that can change the entire galaxy. It is more important to determine how to solve the problem rather than moving first."

“Understood.”

“And.....the other reason I wanted to talk to you was to give you a warning.”

Marquis Martin opened his mouth again.

“I told you this when giving you the rights to S-20. Currently my relationship with the Minister of Domestic Affairs Jyubel isn’t that good. Jyubel doesn’t like the fact that I gave S-20 to you. I’ve received information that he is secretly in contact with the Laius company regarding S-20.”

“Regarding S-20? Why?”

“I don’t know either. But originally the Laius company had permission to set up a research centre at Mt. Fargo. If Jyubel is contacting them regarding S-20 then it probably isn’t good for you.”

This was certainly unwelcome news. Now there was a twist in the sector that he tried so hard to grow! If a Marquis with the same power as Marquis Martin was involved then this situation was serious.

“If Laius and Jyubel join forces then it will be tough. There is no guarantee that will happen but it will be good if you are vigilant. If I learn anything else then I will inform you immediately. Because I’m also responsible for S-20.”

“Thank you.”

Ark bowed with a humble expression. The relationship with Marquis Martin hadn’t started off that great but he had been a strong supporter through many events.

“That is it from me. You can leave now.”

Ark exited the meeting room.

“Sob, Hyung-nim, thank you!”

Tori tearfully said as he also came out of the meeting room.

“Don’t be thankful. This is part of my contract with you. Do you understand?
If you ever try anything.....”

“T-that will never happen.”

“Okay. I’ll believe you. But this is your last chance.”

Ark was walking down the corridor with Tori when he stopped. Irina who he thought had left long ago was leaning against the wall. Ark was confused by the unexpected situation and asked.

“Irina-nim? Why are you still here?”

“I forgot something.”

“Forgot something?”

“.....Thank you for rescuing me.”

Irina hesitated before saying in a small voice. Irina looked down with a bashful expression. His heart that was back to normal after the conversation with Marquis Martin started rising again.

“Ah no, that.....”

“Hyung-nim, I’ll go first.”

The astute Tori quickly escaped. This was something praiseworthy about him. But the atmosphere became more awkward once Tori left. Ark and Irina stood there awkwardly for a while without saying much.

“That reminds me, this is the second time I need to say thank you.”

“Huh? Ah, yes. That’s right.”

“Did you accept Marquis Martin’s quest to investigate the magic circle?”

“Huh? Ah, yes. I received it.”

“Indeed.”

And then silence again.

‘Damn! What is this? Stupid child, you normally talk so well so why can’t you speak now?’

Ark felt like cursing because of the awkward atmosphere.

“I will team up with Camel again to go to the space frontier. I’ll contact Marquis Martin who will pass onto you my information.”

Irina said before turning away.

“W-wait a minute!”

Ark raised his head and exclaimed. This opportunity wasn’t common. Ark had this thought and called out to her. But Ark’s mouth ended up stuttering his idea.

“T-there is.....would you like to eat dinner with me on the outside? No, that is.....it isn’t a selfish thing.....”

“Isn’t it?”

Irina paused and asked. Ark sighed as their eyes met and said.

“I’m sorry. I mean.....it is selfish.”

‘Stupid! A date with a girl out of your league.....’

He started cursing himself in his head.

“I’ll get in touch.”

“Huh?”

Ark’s head shot up. And he asked with a stunned look.

“What did you say just now?”

“It is busy in game so it will be easier to meet on the outside. I’ll get in touch with Ark-nim and will inform you of my schedule. We will make an appointment then.”

“R-really? Really?

“Colonel Buldio is waiting so I’ll go first.”

Irina smiled and tapped something into Ark’s Nymphe.

-Irina-nim’s recognition code (R-02007) has been stored in your Nymphe.

That message popped up! The recognition code was different from knowing the name. It meant they could whisper or if they were thousands of light years away then they could send mail. In other words, he could contact her with it!

‘It feels like I’ve crashed into something!’

Ark was unsteady after being given her number (?). However Ark’s good mood only lasted 1 minute before plummeting.

“Ah, you must be Ark-nim. I’ve followed Marquis Martin’s instructions and registered your spacecraft with the galactic federation. Now you can access any area under the jurisdiction of the federation. Here are the related documents. Ark-nim just needs to sign here.”

Bonan extended a form.

<Silver Star> Registration Receipt

Ship Owner: Ark

Registered Ship: Medium-3rd grade (Battleship)

Acquisition Tax: 500 gold

Environmental Charge: 100 gold

Registration Fee: 200 gold

Compulsory Insurance: 200 gold

* Total: 1,000 gold

That was the amount on the receipt. The total price was 1,000 gold!

–You should receive it. It will be needed soon.

Marquis Martin’s words when receiving the military scrip rang through his head.

Space 8: That Man

SPACE 8. That Man

[TL Note] Hey guys, I made a slight change to chapter 6 of this volume. Tolbo has become 'the bearded man' and his actual name will be revealed later in this chapter.

'The government.....the government.....'

Ark grinded his teeth together.

'That is committing robbery! Why is the acquisition tax 500 gold? How did the federation help me obtain the Silver Star? And the environmental charge is 100 gold? Is this a joke? What is compulsory insurance? Are there traffic accidents in space? And the registration fee? I have to pay 200 gold to register it? And the total price is 1,000 gold? This is robbery!'

His anger exploded the more he thought about it. The Silver Star was a ship that originally belonged to the Murat. Ark found it and Tori repaired it after a long fight with the Nakuma.

That role the federation played in helping Ark get the Silver Star was only 0.00001%. Then why! The federation was taking away 1,000 gold from him! It was absurd! An abuse of power! But Ark paid the 1,000 gold with the military scrip. A bad law was still a law. He couldn't do anything because of this nonsense.

"I'm sorry but if your ship isn't registered then you can't enter Istana. You will have to leave the ship here and leave via the shuttle. A shuttle is available if you require it. Of course, there is also a fee for this."

He had no choice but to pay!

‘If I buy a new ship then I would still need to pay a separate tax anyway. And the minimum price for a ship like this is 10,000 gold. 1,000 gold is profitable compared to that.’

He had no choice but to think like this! Therefore he gave Buldio’s military scrips and the registration was complete. Ark was able to leave the garrison headquarters once he officially gained possession of the Silver Star. And he finally plunged into Istana’s atmosphere!

“Hyung-nim, we will arrive at the destination soon!”

Tori said as he busily moved his hands. At the same time, outside the window the clouds parted and acres of forest stretched out. And there was Mt. Fargo! It was Ark’s sector S-20. Ark had finally returned to S-20.....

“Eh?”

He was confused.

“You have a little cold.”

The family doctor said as he used a medical device to examine him.

“I said this the other day but I agree with you playing a virtual reality game. A disabled person can experience many things that normally can’t and it eliminates a lot of mental stress. In fact, an experiment found that 70% of patients in similar situations who used a virtual reality game recovered a lot faster. But that is just a supportive therapy.”

“I know.”

“Then you’ll also know that fatigue still builds up in your body despite playing the virtual reality game. I heard that you’ve been sleeping in your capsule for

the past few days but that isn't always good. You have a fever so you should rest for a few days and take your medicine.

“Yes.....”

The young man answered feebly. He didn't have to hear the doctor's diagnosis to know that his physical condition wasn't good. His head and the muscles of his body felt heavy. He couldn't think. The last few days he spent sleeping in the game was to blame. And it was all for one reason. In order to meet Ark.

‘I wonder when I can meet him?’

The young man muttered as he looked up at the ceiling. Questions ran through his head. He still couldn't find the answer to why he wanted to meet Ark. He knew it wasn't logical but the young man wasn't going to give up on finding Ark. What type of existence was the user Ark to him? He wouldn't know the answer if he couldn't meet Ark. After a few attempts, he finally arrived in Ark's sector S-20. But he still couldn't be relieved. He had missed Ark so many times it felt like someone was interfering with him. There was no guarantee this interference wouldn't be repeated. Those misgivings didn't allow the young man to rest.

‘I won't repeatedly make the same mistakes.’

The young man painfully raised his body and entered the capsule. He started the capsule and his consciousness was sent back to Galaxian.

Syu syu syu syu!

At the square to the rear of S-20's main office. An airship caused a storm as it landed among a few other airships. A boy with grey skin and big eyes ran over.

“Welcome to S-20 where you can rest, hunt or have a large selection of items! Please think carefully. It wouldn’t be wise to leave such an expensive spacecraft in a place where monsters or thieves can attack it. But you can be relieved if you leave it at the airfield in this sector! S-20 will manage it safely. Short term parking is 50 silver a day. Long term is 4 gold for 10 days. Instead, if you park in the sector then you will only need to pay 1 sector fee for 3 people. How many days are you going to be here?”

“There is an airfield here?”

One person stepped out of the ship. The body’s big eyes became even larger as he saw the person’s face.

“H-Hyung-nim!”

That boy was Hegel. The one he was looking at was Ark.

“Why is Hyung-nim in that ship.....?”

“I obtained it.”

“Huh? You obtained it? That means this is Hyung-nim’s ship?”

“Yes.”

Hegel’s mouth widened at the ensuing answer. A general airship cost thousands of gold. A spacecraft would be a minimum of 10,000 gold. He had left for a while and brought home a spacecraft. The stunned Hegel couldn’t understand the situation. However it was the same for Ark.

‘Is this really S-20?’

Ark looked around with confusion. S-20 had been similar to a wasteland when Ark left for Amara. Shein and Kuma had created a barrier to indicate it was a sector while there were some facilities and merchant trailers inside. It also only had a population of 600 people. The sector was generally empty because most

people were in the dungeon. It was embarrassing to even call it a sector. He had been worrying about that part on his way back. Ark had spent 10 days away from S-20.

‘Damn, I thought I would be gone for 3 days at most but it ended up taking a ridiculous 10 days. S-20 is a new sector. If the administrator is away for 10 days then it is impossible for the sector to operate properly.’

No matter how smart Mellin and Hegel were, in the end they were just NPCs. They had less flexibility to deal with unexpected situations than a user. Moreover, their training had been focused on battle so they had no knowledge about managing a sector.

‘It will be lucky if they manage to maintain the status quo.’

However it was different from his expectations. Ark could see that there were at least 1,000 people just flying over S-20. There must be at least 2,000 when considering the people in the dungeon. It had increased by 3~4 times when Ark was gone. Of course, this was due to Slayer, Leon and Melina raising awareness with their promotions. Ark was more amazed by the shape of the sector than the population. All types of stores formed a grid at the sector entrance! A special fence to indicate the way to Mt. Fargo was created with guide posts everywhere. They even utilized an empty piece of land as an airfield!

‘This is similar to the blueprint of the sector that I envisioned!’

Naturally the facilities were still small. However S-20’s current structure was almost the same as what Ark would’ve created. It felt like they’ve read Ark’s ideas and implemented it. While Ark was busy thinking.

“But who is this with you.....?”

Hegel asked as Tori got off behind Ark.

“Oh, this guy is Tori. He will eat rice from the same pot as us from now on.”

“The same pot? Then he is a new employee?”

“Yes, please educate him well as his senior.”

“Ohh! Indeed. You’re called Tori? Let’s get along well.”

Hegel’s eyes shone like lanterns as he held out his hand. Then Tori slapped Hegel’s hand and declared sharply.

“What? Tori? Why are you speaking informally? I am.....”

“You’re what? So? What were you going to say?”

Ark interrupted and asked. Tori flinched and started babbling.

“Ah, no. If you’re Hyung-nim’s follower then you’re my Hyung-nim too!”

“And? Your position in my agent?”

“I’m the youngest member!”

“Does your behaviour mean you are still lacking in education?”

“Hik! N-no Hyung-nim! I temporarily went crazy because of tiredness from the long flight! Seniors, please take care of me from now on! If you tell me to turn then I’ll turn!”

Tori shouted as he kowtowed. Tori was once someone who operated his own junkyard. And he demonstrated his fine skills as an engineer on Amara. Ark’s contract with Tori was officially signed after the meeting with Buldio.

-Tori has joined Dark Eden as an intern.

Name: Tori (NPC ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆) Occupation: Engineer

Level: 110

Related Skills: Hacking, mechanical engineering, invention, repair.....

That information window emerged when Tori joined. Just like skills, the stars displayed next to the name indicated the difficulty of acquisition. In other words, having more stars meant the NPC was difficult to get. Tori had 4 stars attached to him. Jay was a similar engineer but he only had 2 stars. In other words, Tori was rated 2 stars higher than Charem's head of research!

The Royal Guards also had 4 stars next to them. But that was because the Royal Guards were pioneers. They could resurrect at the Fairy so their utilization rate was high. However Tori was a general NPC. If he was rated 4 stars then he had much higher skills than the Royal Guards.

'But.....'

Ark refused to trust him. Unlike the Royal Guards, Ark used a combination of a deal+ violence as a leash to hold Tori. He couldn't give any chances to that guy. There were some cases where Ark might need to leave Tori at S-20. So he wanted to make sure the Royal Guards knew the hierarchy. A 4 star rate NPC. The more difficult they were to get, the more difficult they were to maintain. Anyway!

"Let's get along well with each other. Yes?"

"Yep! I am Hyung-nim's loyal dog! No, hamster!"

The effect of his education still remained. Ark turned back to Hegel after hearing Tori's reply.

"There weren't any big problems while I was away? You've seemed to have

made a lot of adjustments to the sector like the airfield. Did you and Mellin think of that?”

“Ah, that’s right!”

Hegel suddenly raised his head.

“Someone has been waiting for Hyung-nim for 10 days.”

“Me? Who?”

“A pioneer nicknamed Rapid.”

“Rapid? Rapid.....”

He searched through his head for that name.

“Why is he waiting for me?”

“Eh? You don’t know him? He told me he knew Hyung-nim. And he wanted to meet Hyung-nim directly. By the way, he really is amazing.”

“Amazing? Why?”

“There were a large number of visitors as soon as Hyung-nim left. Many shops also opened so there were many disputes among the pioneers and merchants. That person is the one who resolved the issue. Not only that. He reorganized the sector into areas, established rules to resolve disputes, created a toll for the dungeon entrance and made guests can pay a fee to find a party for the dungeon. He even proposed creating an airfield for visitors with airships.”

“The guy called Rapid did all this?”

He had thought all of this was done by Mellin and Hegel. He never expected that a third person could be involved. Why? Who would painstakingly grow a sector he wasn’t involved in? In addition, his plans were almost consistent with Ark’s blueprint. He was a person with management skills. Yet he couldn’t

remember meeting someone like that.

‘But they know me? Who is it?’

“Where is Rapid now?”

“He’s in the office. He’s never left the vicinity since he arrived 10 days ago.”

“Okay. Let’s meet with him.”

Ark headed towards the office with Hegel. The office across from the airfield.....the facility didn’t match the wilderness around it. A desk made of mechanical parts was placed near the bulletin board that Ark built. Hegel ran to the desk and shouted.

“Grandpa Mellin, Hyung-nim is back!”

“Hyung-nim? Ark? Ohh! Ark is finally back!”

Mellin who was chatting with several visitors quickly ran over. But Ark was looking at someone else. A blond youth had stood up in shock after hearing Ark’s name. He must be the person called Rapid based on the atmosphere. Ark’s eyes met those of the young man.

‘What?’

Ark stopped walking. Usually he could read the opponent’s emotions to a certain extent when he looked in their eyes. But he couldn’t read Rapid’s feelings. It wasn’t because there were no specific emotion that appeared. On the contrary, too many complex emotions rose at once. Delight, embarrassment, anger, confusion. He couldn’t differentiate between them. However that wasn’t why he stopped moving.

‘That face.....’

Rapid was a user. And the face felt familiar. It made him uncomfortable for some reason.

“I heard that you waited 10 days for me. What can I do for you?”

Ark was the one who spoke first after looking at Rapid for a while. Rapid who had been staring blankly at Ark now looked shocked. Ark also couldn't understand this response. Rapid looked upset before he seemed to remember something and said.

“I have to ask you something first.”

“What is it?”

“New World's Ark, are you that person?”

‘Damn, is it because of this?’

He had received this question countless number of times since starting Galaxian. Ark's answer had always been NO. A director of Global Exos playing the game of its rival would catch attention and he also didn't want the unwelcome attention from other users. This was what he got for not thinking properly. Ark was a well-known name. Furthermore, the Ark of New World had made many friends and enemies. In New World he didn't have to worry about anyone challenging him but he wasn't strong enough in Galaxian.

‘I should've thought more carefully when creating the character.’

Many problems arose from using the name Ark. But what was the point of regretting now? All Ark could do was deal with it.

“No I'm not. I just wanted to try a famous name. Take a good look. My face is a little different from the Ark on TV. And I heard that Ark of New World hasn't joined Galaxian yet.”

“.....Officially.”

Rapid narrowed his eyes like a hawk.

“But I know. Ark of New World has entered Galaxian. And if my guess is right

then you are that Ark. Tell me the truth.”

If it was anyone else then he would insist that they were wrong and move on. However he couldn't ignore Rapid's urgent look. Why was he looking so urgent? Somehow his face weighed on Ark's mind. Moreover, he was the one who raised Ark's sector while he was gone. Ark could just ignore it and move on but he was also curious about Rapid's identity.

“Okay. Say I am that Ark. Why are you looking for Ark in Galaxian?”

“Ark.....is it?”

Rapid seemed like he didn't like Ark's answer. But he soon nodded and said.

“Okay. Say you are that Ark. Please take a close look at my face. I know you. And you.....should remember me.”

“I should know you?”

“Yes, in New World not Galaxian. We've clearly met.”

“Let's see. I've met quite a few people in New World so how can I remember everyone?”

Ark scratched his head and replied. Then Rapid's face clouded.

‘He doesn't remember my face?’

Rapid wasn't using the same name from New World. Like Ark, his name was once well known in New World. Rapid started playing Galaxian after it was already a month and his name was already taken so he used a different one. However his face looked just like his character in New World. Of course, the game's graphic engine would make the face a little different even if it was the same one. Yet there was no significant different between this character and the one in New World. Therefore Rapid thought that Ark would know him when they met. However Ark had betrayed his expectations. There were no signs that

Ark remembered who he was.

‘Was I someone who didn’t make that much of an impact on you? The face is only a little different yet you can’t recognize it?’

Rapid had been holding onto his resolution to meet Ark for the last 4 months. He couldn’t sleep properly as he waited in S-20 and even got a cold. Yet Ark didn’t even recognize him. Rapid felt like all his efforts so far had been wasted.

Of course, he probably wasn’t thinking that clearly. Yes his characters looked the same. But asking someone to recognize a face that hadn’t seen in more than 1 year might be unreasonable. Normally Rapid might’ve understood this as well. However his body condition wasn’t good so he couldn’t repress his emotions. Rapid raised his head with an angry expression.

‘He met quite a few people in New World? Yes, I guess so. But I’m not talking about such people. Give me a straight answer. You have to remember me. It is impossible not to remember me. How can you not remember? I can’t forget. In other words, you’re not supposed to have forgotten about me!’

And just as he was about to say these words. Maybe it was because of the cold or he prescription medicine but he suddenly felt dizzy.

“Eh? Are you okay?”

Ark grabbed his shoulder. Then Rapid grabbed his arm and began to talk.

“I-I’m fine. Rather, I.....the reason I visited you.....”

“Hahahaha! I’m back!”

Then a man ran into the sector while giving a silly laugh. Rapid’s face warped at that moment. The bearded man was someone who kept challenging him to a duel. The bearded man looked at Rapid and laughed.

“Rapid, bring it on! Huhuhu, this time won’t be the same as before. I assure

you. I, Kurakan will.....”

“Get lost!”

Rapid turned and shouted. Kurakan became frightened and retreated. However he recovered after a moment and lifted his machine gun.

“What, what the? Are you too scared to face this Kurakan? Not a chance. I’ll say this clearly, I haven’t been defeated by you yet. You’re the one who interrupted my duel with Ark first. So let’s end this. If you don’t accept the duel then I’ll just attack you!”

“Who is this bastard? You’re challenging me to a duel?”

Ark turned towards Kurakan. Then Rapid pushed Ark and walked forward.

“Don’t worry. You don’t have to go. I’ll handle this and return. Please wait. I still have something to say.”

His annoyance soared because of his headache. Rapid headed towards the square outside the office. He stopped 10 metres away from Kurakan and said in a low voice.

“Start.”

“That’s it. Huhuhu, this time.....”

Tang-! Tang-! Tang-!

Like always, shots rang out at Kurakan’s words.

“W-what the, this speed?”

Ark’s eyes popped out with surprise. Ark was interested in the used called Rapid. Therefore he watched carefully and never saw him pull out his gun. It was a quick fire! The speed at which he pulled the trigger was unimaginable. By default, all guns in Galaxian had a firing speed option. But that penalty only

applied for weapons like sniper rifles, RPGs or machine guns. A pistol's firing rate depended on the speed that the trigger was pulled. Most users didn't like a pistol because the recoil was high and the hit rate was low. But Rapid's level surpassed those weaknesses. He had amazing marksmanship with a high hit rate.

'No wonder why that Kurakan seems to have lost against Rapid a few times.....how can a machine gun deal with a pistol like that? I never knew that the pistol could be used in such an amazing way. But.....'

Ping! Ping! Ping!

"Huhuhu, I've figured out your pattern now!"

Kurakan laughed as he hid his face behind a shield. The moment he lifted his machine gun, there was another gunshot and the muzzle of the machine gun shot upwards. Rapid had aimed and hit the muzzle.

'That is the way to block that.'

It required a lot of skill. Kurakan had no confidence in his hit rate so he chose something that fired a lot of bullets. The gunfight then proceeded in Rapid's favour. Rapid used his amazing quick fire and hit rate to stop Kurakan from firing as well as aiming at his vital spots. If he couldn't use a headshot because of the shield then he would aim at the shoulders! Meanwhile Kurakan's shots kept on being deflected in the wrong direction. That's because Rapid hit the muzzle and redirected it every time.

"Amazing!"

"How on earth can he hit like that?"

The gathered spectators started exclaiming. But Ark saw something different.

'What is he doing?'

Rapid was definitely dominating the gunfight. But Ark's anxiety grew as he watched the situation. The difference between their skills was obvious. Kurakan was bleeding heavily. However the one who was breathing harshly and had sweat on his face was Rapid.

‘That reminds me, that guy almost collapsed when he was approaching me. I thought he had just lost his footing. It is obvious that Rapid isn't feeling too good right now. It seems to be a cold. It is amazing that he can fight like this but his movement is becoming increasingly dull. If this continues.....’

“Pant pant pant! Pant pant pant!”

Suddenly Rapid collapsed to his knees. It wasn't because Kurakan shot him. He just collapsed because he lost his strength. Rapid tried to raise his body a few times but his quivering legs wouldn't move. Ark who was watching shouted.

“Wait a minute! Kurakan, wait!”

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu!

Gunshots were heard and blood welled from Rapid's body. The feeble Rapid saw Ark and said.

“Ark....I.....I.....”

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu!

Several more slugs penetrated Rapid's body. The gunfight had been one sided before Rapid fell down. Therefore he still had health left despite the dozens of bullets hitting him. But then a bullet pierced Rapid's head. And a shower of bullets followed! Finally Rapid's health reached zero.

“I-I did it!”

Kurakan cheered with joy. And he placed his foot on Rapid's body!

“Hahahaha! It is impossible for someone using a pistol to hold out forever

against me. The person who wins in the end is the winner! Another loot has been added to my autobiography. Now I just need to beat that wannabe Ark. Hey, you guys! Did you see me skills? Now this guy isn't my opponent anymore. Where is that farting bastard Ark! I'll take him out like this guy!"

Kurakan kicked Rapid and shouted.

Ppajik.

Something snapped in Ark's head. He didn't know the reason. For some reason he felt upset. Ark walked forward towards Kurakan.

"I am Ark."

"What? This guy is Ark?"

"Yes, if you want then apply for a duel."

"W-wait a minute! Let me recover first!"

Kurakan yelled as he pulled out a recovery ampoule. Ark waited. Kurakan had to completely recover his health and mental power. Meanwhile Ark heard from Mellin and Hegel that Kurakan had applied for a duel 20 times. Mellin shook his head and muttered.

"He is more tenacious than a cockroach. That's why Rapid couldn't sleep properly for the past few days. I'm worried that he will bother you now."

"Hey! Let's get started! Duel!"

-A duel has started!

Ark got up and accepted. He looked at Kurakan and laughed.

"I'll tell you in advance but I'm not like Rapid."

A blue light soared up from his sword hilt.

“How is he?”

“His mental and physical condition is extremely weak. I warned him to be careful when I realized he wasn’t sleeping properly.....he didn’t listen. And he seems to be receiving a lot of stress. His weakened immunity means that the cold is worsening.”

“Will he be okay?”

“I need to wait and see a bit more.....as you know your son’s case is different from normal. The situation can deteriorate even from a common cold. He assured me that he would be careful.....what happened?”

“I don’t know either.”

“It’s really frustrating. He should know better than anyone not to work his body too hard. Anyway, the necessary precautions have been taken. Right now he needs rest more than anything else.”

“Thank you.”

“Call me when the patient wakes up.”

The doctor then left the hospital room.

“Dammit!”

Yoo Han-pil cursed as the door closed. He had been overseas on business for a couple of days. Yet he suddenly received an urgent message from his secretary several hours ago. His only son had been transferred to hospital. Yoo Han-pil postponed all his schedules and returned home straight away. However his son wasn’t awake.

According to his servants at home, his son hadn’t left the capsule for Galaxian since Yoo Han-pil left. However he ate his meals and slept so they hadn’t been

too worried. Until this afternoon. When the employee was bringing up the morning meal, the employee noticed his son was unconscious in the capsule.

“It is my fault. I have to stop this.”

Yoo Han-pil said in a pained voice. He had been worried about his son playing the virtual reality game. However his son had persisted and Yoo Han-pil eventually allowed it. And he seemed to be improving after starting Galaxian. But it exploded today. Seeing his son lying in a hospital bed brought back the nightmare of 1 year ago. That nightmare event that happened to the son he was so proud of! He couldn't let that same nightmare happen again!

“Secretary Kim!”

Yoo Han-pil turned around and shouted. The door opened and his secretary entered.

“Go home right now and break that capsule!”

“T-the Galaxian capsule?”

“Yes, that damn capsule! Right now.....”

Yoo Han-pil suddenly flinched and closed his mouth. He felt a touch on his hand. Yoo Han-pil hurriedly looked down and saw his son watching him.

“Not yet.....no.....”

His son tightly grasped his hand.

“Hrmm.”

Ark scratched his head. And looked at his Nymph again.

-S-20's Ten Temporarily Commerce Rules

-S-20's Ten Temporarily Dungeon Rules

“Who on earth is he?”

He had downloaded the rules that Rapid thought of onto his Nymphe. The sector was run by the administrator. Criminal related matters like chaotic users still followed the federation’s laws but all other matters were up to the administrator. So Ark had planned on creating rules for S-20 but Rapid had amazingly thought of all of them. It was to the degree that it seemed like Rapid was reading his mind! Therefore Ark didn’t need to create or change any rules. Rapid was the one who applied the rules. It was also more detailed than the ones Ark thought of. It was a game but there weren’t many people who could do something like this. And if that person met Ark then the number became even smaller.

“Looking at Rapid’s reaction, he doesn’t seem to be lying when he said he met me.....”

No one could lie with that expression on their face. To be honest, only 1 person came to Ark’s mind. No, he remembered that person as soon as he saw Rapid. There was a 70% similarity between ‘him’ and Rapid. But Ark soon shook his head.

‘He’ didn’t have a body that could play the game. ‘He’ also had an accident in New World and Ark heard that he was like a vegetable. So ‘he’ couldn’t play a virtual reality game again. And even if he had begun the game, it was impossible for him to gain Rapid’s skill.

“I wanted to talk to him a bit more.”

Dururong. Dururong.

Then he heard snoring underneath him.

“What? This? Ha, this child’s luck has increased. Shall I wake his spirit?”

Ark stabbed his lightsaber into the person sleeping.

“Ah!”

A scream burst out! Ark rose from the seat in front of him.

“Hey, your health has been restored. Wake up. I have to start again.”

“Ugh, still? Take a look at me! Yet you still want to continue?”

“What are you talking about? I haven’t even started yet. Didn’t you say your strength was your patience and tenacity? And I heard that you kept Rapid sleep deprived for the past week. Yet haven’t you only suffered for 12 hours?”

“B-but.....”

“Well, I’ll just do it comfortably then. Here I go!”

Bam, bam, bam, bam, bam, bam!

“Ouch! Ack! Cough! Ugh!”

Kurakan screamed every time Ark hit him. Kurakan had killed Rapid and then challenged Ark to a duel. However the result was too shameful to be called a duel. Kurakan had become a rice cake and collapsed as soon as it started. But Kurakan didn’t care.

“Huhuhu, you! Kill me! You’ll soon realize what a big mistake that is. My strength is my patience and tenacity! I will go after you a 2nd and a 3rd.....”

“Who is going to kill you?”

“What?”

“Actually, my strength is also my patience and tenacity. Let’s see who has more patience and tenacity.”

Ark said and began to step on the bloody Kurakan. Once again, the armour in Galaxian was so good that kicks wouldn’t reduce any health unless the person

was wearing a battle suit. But that didn't mean the user received no damage. Virtual reality games like to make the character 'feel like it was as real as reality' so the users could feel pain. Of course, this was just a slight jolt.

However it could cause a lot of pain if persistently hit. And Ark was persistently hitting the same vital spot. Kurakan kept on feeling an electric shock to the extent that the area became sensitive! Even his clothes became soft after a while. And it wasn't just the shock. Ark would hit Kurakan until his health reached 5%. Then he would switch to defense and wait for Kurakan's health to recover. And he would start hitting again as soon as the health was restored!

"Stop! I was wrong! Just kill me!"

Kurakan finally screamed. He gave up on resistance and just lay down. But that didn't stop Ark. He mercilessly waited for Kurakan's health to recover.

Then bam bam bam!

Kurakan couldn't even break the connection. The connection couldn't be terminated during a duel because it would be considered cheating and there would be a huge penalty. And he couldn't commit suicide. Ark wouldn't let him commit suicide. So back to bam bam bam!

It had lasted for 10 hours! Even if Ark stopped attacking, Kurakan had already lost his stamina so he would just doze off while waiting for Ark to lose strength. However Ark had slept for a lot during the 24 hours warp to Istana so he had stamina to spare. Furthermore, Ark had once spent 3 days without any sleep in New World so he could endure for a lot longer.

He was hitting Kurakan for 1 minute and resting for 10. He would wake him up after 10 minutes, deliver the beating, wait another 10 minutes and so on.....Kurakan had already gone insane by the time he repeated it for 10 hours.

Finally Kurakan woke up from the pain and grabbed Ark's leg while crying.

"Please stop now! I have bruises all over my body! I was wrong! Please let me sleep! I swear! I won't come here again!"

Ark stopped the violence and looked around. The spectators flinched and avoided his gaze. It wasn't just them. Mellin, Hegel and Tori who had been watching the scene of violence were also frozen.

'The atmosphere is right.'

In fact, Ark had a reason for persistently stepping on Kurakan. Kurakan appeared and caused trouble when Ark was away. He had to ensure that no user tried the same thing in the future. The sector was under the jurisdiction of the federation but he couldn't ask them for help. Guys like Kurakan could cause a lot of damage. Moreover, Ark was a well-known user. Guys like Kurakan would keep coming to challenge him. That's why he stepped on Kurakan for 10 hours!

—If you challenge me then it won't end well!

He sent a warning message to all users in the steadily growing sector. And that warning was also sent to the Royal Guards and Tori. It seemed like it was already having an effect.

"Okay. This is enough for now."

"R-really?"

"But if you mess around here again....."

"I won't do it anymore! I won't even look at this place!"

"That would be a problem."

"Huh?"

“Haven’t you interrupted work for a few hours over the last week? Thanks to that my sector is covered in an uncomfortable mentality and I’ve lost money. And didn’t you kill Rapid who helped with my work? Does it make any sense that you can just leave?”

“T-then what do you want? I don’t see.....”

“Huh?”

“Ah, no it’s fine!”

Kurakan freaked out and agreed as soon as he frowned.

“Yes! That’s right! I killed him! I was wrong! I will listen to you! What do you want me to do?”

“Spend a week volunteering around S-20 to compensate for the damage.”

“A-A week volunteering? You want me to work here for a week?”

“You don’t want to?” Then I can continue this for one week.”

“Ah, no! I will do it! I’ll dedicate myself to serving you!”

“If you try to escape.....”

Ark raised his lightsaber and threatened.

“I’ll find you and bother you for a week.”

Ark made Kurakan register his code on Ark’s Nymph and registered his on Kurakan’s. Kurakan’s face darkened.

Space 9: Event! Event! Event!

SPACE 9. Event! Event! Event!

Pioneer quest <Dark Omen>. In fact, Ark didn't mind the quest that much. In fact, Ark didn't care about the quest. It was a quest given to all agents of the 3 powers. He didn't know if he could get a huge reward with so many people. And he didn't have any clues related to it. In this situation it would be stupid for him to blindly jump into the wide galaxy. If all agents from the 3 powers started moving then information would eventually appear. So there was no reason to rush. He would rather have his power base properly formed.....

–Why is it coming now?

He had dropped in at the Elim's Sanctuary after dealing with Kurakan. The light sphere shouted hysterically like it was a wife waiting for her husband.

–Something unusual is definitely happening.

“Something unusual?”

–The negative energy. Not long ago I detected an aura of negative aura.

The light sphere trembled with anxiety.

–Only antimatter can emit negative energy. And antimatter is a substance that can't exist in this star system. I can only remember one time that there was an influx of antimatter into this star system. It was the time of tribulation when the Karma showed up.

“Karma? This time it is related to Karma?”

–This time?

Ark explained what he experienced on Amara. This was the reason that he actually visited the sanctuary. The sphere's name was 'Elim's Memory' so it

remembered the past. He thought it might know something about the magic circle. But the light sphere couldn't give an answer about what happened in the mine.

-Uhh, it isn't possible to build it with just that. But it can't be overlooked now that negative energy is sensed. Someone might've intentionally called the negative energy. Ark, keep this in mind. You are the Elim's Heir. And the Elim's biggest duty is protection of the galaxy. If there is any potential threat to the galaxy then you have to stop it from happening.

<Investigate the Negative Energy (Occupation only-I)>

The Elim's Memory has recalled the last time negative energy was detected in the galaxy. Based on the Elim's Memory, this might be related to the Karma who sent the galaxy into confusion. The first duty of Elim's Heir is to defend the galaxy. You have to thoroughly investigate the event related to the negative energy.

Difficulty: B+

It was a quest for information like the pioneer quest. He felt like leaving for the space frontier straight away. However Ark still had work to do in S-20.

“Not yet.”

Ark turned his eyes towards the sector entrance. Rapid. He was a user with unexpected skills. After handling Kurakan and visiting the sanctuary, he decided to explore the sector some more. Rapid had maintained and manage the sector and dungeon. Ark looked at everything.

Rapid's fighting ability wasn't normal. Rapid probably lost against Kurakan because of his poor physical condition. It was obvious. If he fought properly than Kurakan wasn't an opponent for him. And Rapid had disposed of Kurakan 20 times. Kurakan was level 80. Kurakan also wasn't skilled so he was easy to handle. But the more important thing was Rapid's attitude. Rapid seemed angry that Ark didn't recognize him.

‘Who the hell is he?’

However he couldn't recall someone like that when he looked through his memory. Therefore he was interested in talking to him again. But it had been two days and Rapid hadn't returned.

‘You can resurrect immediately after a duel. If he hasn't returned yet then he must've registered at a distant place or is somewhere sick. It is one of those two options.’

Either way he would be back. Mellin and Hegel told him that Rapid waited ten days to meet Ark. And their talk had been stopped by Kurakan so he would be back.

‘There is a part I'm worried about.....’

It was something that Hegel said to him.

“Actually Hyung-nim, about Rapid. No, I'm not saying this is fact. There is a strange rumour. That is.....about his sexual preference. Hmmm, you know? Man

to man. He spent 10 days waiting here for Hyung-nim despite having to fight Kurakan.....he might like to with Hyung-nim.....Hyung-nim, be careful.”

Chills ran down his spine. Virtual reality games were common these days. The problem of the realism was that stalking could occur in the game. While a virtual reality game regulated pain, there was no way to regulate the victim’s mental pain. Especially if the other person was a man. He couldn’t help feeling cold at the thought that it could be true.

‘I didn’t get that feeling when I saw him.....’

Ark made a promise to himself. If he met Rapid again then he would determine it. There was no need to worry about it in advance. He had a lot of work to do so he didn’t have time for this.

“Sector Management Window!”

Sector Management Information Window

Sector Code: S-20

Sector Rating: Lv. 1

Sector Range: 1 kilometres around the entrance of Mt. Fargo.

Sector Manager: Ark (Agent: Dark Eden)

Number of Stores: 12 (7: Duty-free shops, 5: 5% tax of the income)

Population: 2,380

Sector Assets: 460 gold

* The current population of the sector has exceeded 2,000 people. If you keep this population for a week then the sector manager can request the installation of major public facilities from the galactic federation. If you bring in 2 or more public facilities then you can raise the level of the sector.

<Population Maintenance Rate: 4/7 Day>

This was the reason Ark focused on increasing the population. The sector's growth was proportional to the growth in population. It led to more people using the stores, earnings increased and the tax collected increased. In addition, a certain population number had to be maintained to install public facilities. It was similar to not making a bus stop if there were only a few people in the village. Having main facilities makes it possible to gather more pioneers. Thus his profit would increase and he could build even more facilities to attract more people. Then the population would increase again.....if he raised the sector in such a way then the last step was promotion to a city.

'Well that is still an issue for the distant future.

Thanks to Rapid, there was a steady increase in population and it reached 2,380 people! If he maintained this for 4 more days then he could gain the qualification to request the public facilities. Of course this wasn't for free.

-<Public facilities able to be installed in a level 1 sector>

Extension (5,000 G): Extend the range of the sector by 1 square kilometres.

Fairy (3,000 G): A Fairy can be installed for pioneers to resurrect at.

Exclusive Route (2,000 G): The sector can be added to the transport route that the federation operates.

Relay Antenna (1,000 G): A large volume relay antenna can be installed in the sector. When the antenna is installed, it is possible to make contact with other cities on Istana and users can receive mail from other colleagues.

These were the facilities available. The critical ones for S-20 were the Fairy and exclusive route. There was no need to explain how important the Fairy was on Galaxian. It was the same for the exclusive route. Only 20% of user possessed private ships so an exclusive route was needed in order for the sector's population to grow.

'The total is 5,000 gold.....'

A sigh naturally emerged when considering the price. Ark presently had less than 100 gold. That's because the 1,000 gold reward from the <Rescue the Pursuers> quest had been used to pay the Silver Star's registration fee. Meanwhile the sector funds only had 460 gold so Ark had approximately 500 gold. But there was still hope. Ark had raked in machine parts from the Abyss of

Despair. He had carefully selected expensive parts so it should come to an average of 700~800 gold.

Yet Ark still hadn't changed the metal into cash. Merchants bought metal because it could be used to repair various equipment. Then there was no reason to sell the metal at stores. He could earn 2~3 times more by using the metal to directly repair equipment. And right now Dark Eden had a staff capable of repairing equipment up to the rare grade and airships!

-Equipment and airship repair.

<Price will be determined after consultation.

Negotiation is possible> Contact: Tori

A new signpost was added next to the office. The professional repair shops in S-20 had their taxes lowered as a compromise but they were still unhappy. The parts that were meant to repair the airship weren't needed anymore because of the Silver Star so he could change the mechanical pieces into cash. He also didn't need to pay the employees. Except for Mellin and Hegel, the remaining Royal Guards had steadily opened the dungeon and had moved to the bottom layer. It had taken 25 days and the Royal Guards had beaten more than 1,000 Thanatos to reach there. Therefore they gained a significant amount of gallstones. That wasn't all. Ark had a separate production thousands of kilometres away. Right now the octopuses were still producing fish paste bars at Charem.

'The factory has been operating for more than a month already. 4 gold would be deducted from the daily earnings for my fee. That is a minimum of 120 gold.'

The repair store, sector's earnings, gallstones and fish paste bars all contributed to his revenue.

'It won't reach 5,000 gold yet but I should be able to collect funds to install the Fairy. But there is no need to blindly rush. Right now it is the starting phase. The sector will be my base so I have to manage all business efficiently.'

"Hegel, call the members of the Royal Guards."

Ark summoned the Royal Guards for a meeting.

"Ohhh! S-sunshine!"

"I didn't know that Istana's air felt this good."

"Eh? The sector has changed from what it was before."

"There are plenty of shops and even a fence. There are also a lot of pioneers."

It had been 25 days since they left the dungeon so the sector's transformation was amazing to the Royal Guards. Ark nodded and said.

"You went to a lot of effort."

"Hyung-nim!"

"As you can see, S-20 has started to look like a sector. You guys have been quietly completing your work despite not even being able to see the sun. But I won't say thank you. S-20 is a sector that belongs to all of us. It might be hard work but the results will return to you."

"Ugh, those words.....!"

"I feel like all my struggles disappeared from Hyung-nim's warm words."

The members were thrilled. Ark moved them to the Silver Star.

"S-ship! Aren't we looking at a ship?"

“Wahhhh! Incredible! This is our ship! On Beltana we were dying of hunger and now we can go anywhere in the galaxy!”

“Meeting Hyung-nim really is a blessing of a lifetime!”

“We will only follow Hyung-nim!”

“Yes, then follow me.”

Ark smiled pleasantly and turned around. And he led the tired and thrilled Royal Guards onto the Silver Star!

“Wow! It’s flying! It really is flying!”

“You idiot! This is a ship. Why are you excited by this much? This ship can even travel through the universe!”

“By the way, why are we on the ship? Is this a celebration ride?”

However the Silver Star landed after 1 minute. The Silver Star had landed at a lake that was 2 km from S-20. It was shrouded in lush forests and had a cool waterfall.

“There is a place like this near S-20?”

“Hyung-nim, why did you bring us here?”

“This brat, didn’t I just say it? Look, a waterfall and lake! Don’t you see? We’ve struggled so now he is bringing us to a place to relax and swim.”

“Huh? What is that?”

“Let’s clean up first before talking.”

Ark pointed to the monsters rambling on the shores of the lake. This was the Outlands. The area might be seemingly beautiful but there were dangers all around. That applied here as well. There were a large variety of monsters around the lake so 10 of them instantly came rushing the moment the Silver

Star landed. The monsters were at least level 130!

“Please leave it to me!”

“I’d be happy to show you the power of the muscles I gained from digging!”

The Royal Guards raised their arms without any hesitation. They had spent 25 days in a dungeon. The Royal Guards hadn’t spent all of that time digging. The dungeon was filled with Thanatos. The crew fought countless battles with them during the dungeon restoration work. And the Thanatos in the middle layer were level 140~150! Thanks to that, the Royal Guards now had an average level of 80. It wasn’t just their level.

“Much stronger Electromagnetic Hammer!”

“Sharper Screw Blade!”

The warriors Berad and Ralph rushed at the monsters first. The hammer and sword that had become more crossed the space. There was a ringing sound and a monster shaped like a rhinoceros retreated. But when it was about to strike back, Berad and Ralph split to the left and right.

“Now! Attack!”

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu!

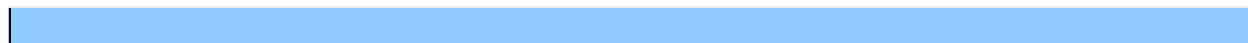
Dozens of bullets poured towards the gap left by Berad and Ralph! Cupa, Hedro, Reben and Konsed had fired their guns.

“The legs! Its heavy weight is concentrated on its legs!”

The rhino’s legs were instantly battered. Then Kalliben and Beleol lifted their sniper rifles.

Tutung! Tutung!

2 bullets were fired and hit the rhino’s eyes!



-The rhino has been inflicted with the status 'limited vision!'

Since then the battle became completely one-sided. The rhino's legs were worn out and it couldn't see properly so it couldn't last 2 minutes with Berad and Ralph attacking it. This applied to all the monsters. Kalliben and Beleol lured the monsters one at a time using their long-distance rifles. They approached and Berad and Ralph would defeat them in close combat. That repeated for 20 minutes until all the monsters by the lake were wiped out.

"Hyung-nim, how is it?"

The Royal Guards delightedly looked at Ark. However their faces darkened at Ark's next words.

"Yes, it seems you don't need to worry about the monsters here. So I will now explain the task you need to do. Look. This is the area away sector S-20. From now on you will form a channel to connect S-20 to this lake. The width and depth should be a minimum of 3 metres."

This was why Ark brought the Royal Guards here. In fact, Ark had been unaware that there was a lake and waterfall near S-20. While returning on the Silver Star, he had spotted a lake of considerable size 2 km away from S-20. Then the idea of a fish paste bar production plant floated in his head. Originally Ark was going to have his base in Charem. That's why he placed the fish bar production plant near Charem. But he needed to modify that plan after making S-20. There were thousands of kilometres between Charem and S-20. Even if the transport ship stopped at S-20, Charem was too far to manage it directly.

'I should move the food manufacturing plant to the sector.....'

However there were two problems with this. The first was customers to sell

the product to. There wasn't anyone to sell it to in S-20 so it didn't make sense. But now S-20's population exceeded 2,300 people. If he ran a 24 hour fish paste bar production factory then he could sell 2,880 a day. That was the output if the pioneers only consumed one per day. There would be further sales once the pioneers increased!

The other problem was the food ingredients supply. The ingredients were fish. The production plant required fish. Finding this lake solved that problem. The Royal Guards had already cleared the area so they could check out the lake. It was overflowing with fish because not a lot of pioneers had come here! He could sell the bars made from these fish for 50 copper a piece. That was money in Ark's eyes.

'The problem is the monsters around the lake. Jay and the Charenjok have no combat ability. So this place is too dangerous to produce the fish paste bars. However the Royal Guards can't leave S-20 and reside here forever. There is only one way left.....'

That's right. It was to connect the sector to the lake and lure the fish in the lake. Of course it wasn't as easy as it sounded. However Ark and his troops were the masters of digging. The Royal Guards spent the last 25 days digging and reached the master level in dig. Naturally the Royal Guards weren't pleased.

"C-create a channel to S-20 from here?"

"Of course it's hard. But this is also our sector! Our work is for S-20! Don't forget that. If you guys sweat while picking up a shovel then you are sweating for S-20's future. I am deeply grateful for your efforts. You guys completed the hard work in the cave without any complaints and you will also complete this task without any complaints!"

Ark didn't even them any chance to complain. And then he added.

“If you dislike it then you can continue digging in the lower layer.”

“L-lower layer! That’s right, the bottom layer hasn’t been completely restored.”

“25 days without the sun.....”

“Ohh, I don’t want to. If I need to dig then I’d rather do it in a place with sunlight.”

The Royal Guards eventually lifted their shovels. And the construction of the channel stretching 2 km between S-20 and the lake began. Once it started then the construction proceeded rapidly.

Pa pa pa pa! Pa pa pa pa! Pa pa pa pa!

They were people who had mastered shovelling! Rocks and trees were easily dealt with. The spade split the ground and lifted up thick tree roots in one go. While the Royal Guards were creating the channel, Ark starting exploring the area around S-20 with Hegel.

‘The sector population has already increased beyond 2,000 so it will be difficult to collect more users with the dungeon alone. Therefore I have to extend the facilities they can use. A Fairy, supplies and new hunting grounds.’

That’s why he was accompanied by Hegel. Hegel received Scavenger lessons from Heksu so he could find new hunting grounds. If Hegel carefully examined the area around S-20 then he could probably find dungeons or new hunting grounds with lots of loot.

++ Dungeon Information: Nest of the Man-eating Monsters ++

5 km north of S-20.

<Monsters: Caranak (Large, level 100~120)>

++ Hunting Information: Green Plains ++

13 km south of S-20.

<Monsters: Barakun (Medium sized, level
130~150)>

New signposts were built in S-20 with every discovery. Other users wouldn't disclose information if they found a dungeon or hunting ground. It was to monopolize their prey. However Ark's purpose was to grow S-20 rather than hunt. If he wanted other pioneers to come to S-20 then he needed to post more information about dungeons and hunting grounds. It was a type of free service! However Ark didn't disclose the information as soon as he found it. A dungeon was like a treasure chest for users. He didn't know what type of items would be hidden inside. Naturally Ark released the information after sweeping through the dungeon once. Many of them already had other users visit so he didn't get any adventure points for it. He was able to gather a steady amount of items from the dungeons.

-Special Synthetic Fibre cloak (Magic)

Item Type: Cloak Wearer Restriction: Level 90

Defense: 20 Durability: 8/50

A cloak that is very handy to use for adventurers. It is able to protect the body from external contaminants. Depending on the situation, it can even be used as a blanket. If you enter the frontier than the cloaks will develop even further and can be used as a defense. This cloak is woven with new synthetic fibres that are resistant to flames and bullets.

<Agility +10, Resistance to bullets +10%, Fire resistance +20%>

-Barakun's Black Fur x20

Item Type: Ingredient

Some Outland monsters possess biological tissue that is sometimes stronger than materials made with the scientific technology of the 24th century. One of those is the Barakun's fur. If you upgrade your weapons or armour with this material than you can add resistance to lightning attacks.

“These things ebb and flow.”

In fact, he had been living a stressful life so far. He had to fight on Beltana and Athamas’ battlefields, dig at Mt. Fargo and recently the Abyss of Despair. He had always been chasing after something. Even now he had a lot to do. Marquis Martin gave him the <Dark Omen> quest and the Elim’s Memory the <Investigate the Negative Energy>. He also needed to find clues about the location of the divine artefacts. But right now S-20 came first.

He had to connect the channel and move the fish paste bar production factory. He also needed to gather funds to build facilities so he couldn’t leave S-20. Exploring dungeons and hunting grounds were just incidental. There was no need to rush or chase after something. Therefore Ark could leisurely hunt and collect loot. Of course, he couldn’t forget to supervise the construction of the water channel.

“Only a bit more to go.”

Pa pa pa pa! Pa pa pa pa! Pa pa pa pa!

The Royal Guards had been digging like crazy. The dense forest and rocks couldn’t stop them after their experience in the dungeon. Therefore the job had progressed faster than Ark expected, with 1/3rd completed.

“It should be completed tomorrow or the day after and then I can move the Charenjok and food maker from Charem.”

Ark muttered with a warm expression. Then Mellin’s voice was heard from the Nymphe.

–Ark, are you there? Ark!

“Yes, it’s me. What’s wrong?”

–T-that.....there seems to be some trouble in the sector.

“Some trouble?”

–It is hard to explain. I’ll tell you once you return to the sector.

“What are you saying?”

Ark asked with a stunned expression. The man in a uniform replied in a business like voice.

“Like I said in my introduction, I’m from the central government’s special audit team. I’ve looked around the sector and your management is messed up.”

“Messed up? What do you mean?”

“As you know, all sectors have an obligation to ensure their equipment is in accordance with federation law. The first area is security. The sector administration is obliged to ensure that all stores and guests are safe in this area. But I don’t see any common automatic turrets available around S-20. Furthermore, the barrier.....”

The official shook his head as he looked at the fence made of mechanical parts.

“This is what I’m talking about.”

“S-20 has just been designated a sector. The time and money.....”

“But the pioneers have paid for a proper sector. Then the administrator is obliged to provide at least the minimum security for your guests. If you can’t provide that then it is a breach of trust.”

“But.....”

“That isn’t the only problem.”

The official ignored Ark’s words.

“I investigated and discovered that a landslide just occurred at Mt. Fargo. The inside of the cave collapsed. Is that true?”

“Yes, that’s right.”

“Then did you install any disaster prevention facilities?”

“D-disaster prevention facilities?”

“Of course. Didn’t a landslide occur here? In other words, it is highly likely that the same situation could happen again. Doesn’t that require some safety measures? What if it happens again and some pioneers are caught in the landslide? What if they die? If you want to operate the dungeon then shouldn’t it have some basic measures? Furthermore, the sector doesn’t have any sanitary equipment. Ever since Charem happened, all cities and sectors are required by law to have a sanitary facility.”

Why did this dog keep on barking? Of course safety equipment was important. However this was a game. It was the first time he heard about disaster prevention devices needing to be installed in the game. And he was lacking sanitary equipment as well? He just walked in here and started spouting nonsense. But his next words really infuriated Ark.

“The result of my audit has found that S-20 doesn’t meet the standards of a sector. Until the necessary equipment is provided, all operations will be suspended. If you ignore that order and receive new guests then your sector manager’s license may be revoked. If you don’t have the required facilities after 15 days then your license will be cancelled.”

<Audit Command (Sector Quest)>

An official from the government has told you that

S-20 had failed an audit. Therefore all business in the sector is cancelled until you install the necessary safety equipment, disaster prevention facilities and sanitary equipment. If these facilities aren't registered with the central government in a fortnight then your license will be revoked.

Difficulty: –

A quest that he never imagined! If he couldn't complete it within a month then his sector administrator license would be cancelled. It was like being struck by lightning on a clear day. And that was just the beginning.

"That isn't the only problem. In fact, something else has occurred while you were out."

"Another problem has formed?"

"Murders."

"Eh? M-murder?"

"Yes, since yesterday a large number of pioneers hunting the Thanatos has been murdered."

"Who on earth is doing it?"

"I don't know. Those guys use a jamming device to interfere with infrared scopes and communication devices. They kill the pioneers and then run away."

Mellin sighed and continued.

"That's why a large number of pioneers are pouring out of the dungeon. If

they can't hunt properly in the dungeon then we'll have to return the fee they paid us."

It was like misfortune attracted more bad luck. First there was the audit and now the murders?

'Why did this happen all of sudden and together.....?'

S-20 had been created for a month. There had been minor issues that Rapid addressed so he couldn't understand why so many problems were occurring simultaneously. He received a clue several hours later.

Kukung! Kukung! Kukung!

Ark was trying to wrap his mind around the successive problems when he heard the noise. A continuous roar was heard next to the sector. Ark headed to the fence and saw that several machines were engaged in large scale construction. It was obstructing the operation to connect the lake to the sector! Ark stared at the scene with stupid eyes.

"Who the hell received permission for this.....?"

"What permission?"

Then one of the people in the field walked over. He remembered the person.

"You were from the research centre....."

"I am Bain."

Bain. He was the director of the Laius research centre when S-20 had been attacked by the Kero previously. Bain laughed at his expression.

"Congratulations on becoming the administrator of S-20. But what gives you the right to meddle in our company? Look at this. Isn't this S-20's boundary fence? We are free to do anything to the area beyond the boundary. As you know, even 1 cm out of the sector is designated a free zone. This isn't your

jurisdiction so you have no right to interfere.”

“But I’m proceeding with building a water channel here.”

“Channel? Oh that reminds me, I saw some people with shovels while coming here. Were they building the channel? They seem to be digging quite far away.....it is regrettable but they are just digging. We are going to build a research centre here.”

“What?”

“If you have any complaints then bring it up with the Department of Domestic Affairs. Well, it will still be useless.”

Bain said sarcastically.

-This is a construction site for the Laius company.

Sorry for the inconvenience caused by construction noise. Laius is going to build an underpass to Mt. Fargo so all pioneers are welcome to use the dungeon for free.

He placed that sign and leisurely walked away. Laius.....Ark had heard that name from Marquis Martin.

-I’ve received information that Jyubel is secretly in contact with the Laius company regarding S-20. If Jyubel is contacting them regarding S-20 then it probably isn’t good for you. I don’t know what will happen so be careful.

‘.....This was it?’

Ark’s face warped. It hadn’t even been a week since Marquis Martin’s warning and construction work for a Laius research centre began in front of his sector.

‘The purpose of Jyubel and the Laius company.....’

S-20! They planned to take S-20 away from Ark. Ark stared at the signpost

with a bemused expression before his expression changed.

“Those damn bastards want to play like this huh? Okay, if you want a fight then I’ll give you one. You’re mistaken if you think this much will scare me off. If they come this way then I will smash the minster of domestic affairs or the 4 large companies!”

It was at that moment.

Kwa kwa kwa kwang, kwa kwa kwa kwang!

There was a roaring sound from behind him. Ark reflexively turned and saw a shocking scene. One of the airships from the Laius construction work crashed into the centre of the sector! The large body smashed all the stores in the centre.

TO BE CONTINUED